



The Lark Bunting

DENVER FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS/JANUARY 2018/VOL 54 NO 1

HTTP://DFOBIRDS.ORG

Field Trips

Register for DFO field trips on the [website](#) or contact the leader directly. Bring your own binoculars, water, snacks or lunch, and sunscreen. Dress for the weather.

More detailed directions and descriptions of each trip can be found on the website.

Please be considerate and delete your reservation if you are unable to attend a trip for which you have registered.

NOTE: [DFO Big Year 2018 Rules and Regulations](#) can be found on the website.

Pueblo and Cañon City Areas Monday, January 1 6:15 AM - 6:00 PM

Joey Kellner (Email: vireo1@comcast.net Phone: 303-978-1748)

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous
Maximum Participants: 15

Directions: Meet at the Safe-way on Lincoln Ave and Yosemite

We will bird various locations from Colorado Springs to Canon City to Pueblo through a series of “surgical strikes” to maximize our success at finding new birds for the year. We will carpool, in four vehicles of four people each, from the meeting point.

Southwestern Metro Area Tuesday, January 2 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM

David Suddjian (Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 12

Continued on page 2

It's time to leave the nest

by David Suddjian

Flash forward to the end of December 2018. DFO has just completed an amazing year of outings throughout the state. We have found so many great birds and visited so many places. There have been adventures, unexpected successes, and some disappointments, too, of course. Here is what the birders might be saying:

“I saw more and learned more than in any other time of birding.”

“I had not planned on doing a Big Year, but [x number] of field trips later, I had 300 species on my own year list.”

“Meeting all the great people and learning about new places were highlights.”

Today, we are at the launching point and Big Year 2018 is ready to leave the nest. This is a different kind of Big Year—based on species found in Colorado on planned DFO field trips.

The official [Rules and Guidelines](#) can be found on the website. It is a collaborative club effort that depends on our collective knowledge of Colorado birds and our team efforts in the field. The state species list has been coded so that we can intentionally seek out specific species at special places at the right time.

“Wish lists” of key field trip destinations highlighting key species have been prepared for each month to help guide our planning. A strong suite of 16 field trips is available for January and we are going to “go big” from there. Now, much will depend on... you.

Continued on page 3



Field Trips

Continued from page 1

Directions: Meet at the Home Depot at 4277 S Eldridge St, Morrison.

Specific birding spots will be selected the day of the trip based on what is around and the weather. As we begin the Big Year, we will add a number of species this day and we will try for local rarities found over the recent weeks. Plan for some walking.

Chase Trip

Saturday, January 6
6:30 AM - 4:00 PM

Chris Gilbert (Email: chrisgee9@gmail.com
Phone: 804-214-1508)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 7

Directions: Meet at the Colorado Parks and Wildlife, 6060 N Broadway

Leader will check rare bird alerts and plan a route to chase as many as possible. Bring a scope if you have one. We will carpool in two cars; riders should expect to share gas expenses with the driver.

Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR
Saturday, January 6

7:15 AM - 11:30 AM

Patrick O'Driscoll (Email: patodrisk@gmail.com;
Phone: 303-885-6955)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the Arsenal Visitors Center, 6550 Gateway Rd, Commerce City, CO.

The first DFO "Big Year" visit to our local national refuge will focus on waterfowl, raptors, and other winter residents. Expect to walk 2-3 miles of level paths. We may need to carpool to locations where parking is tight. Bring a scope, if you have one.

Continued on next page

DFO's collective memories

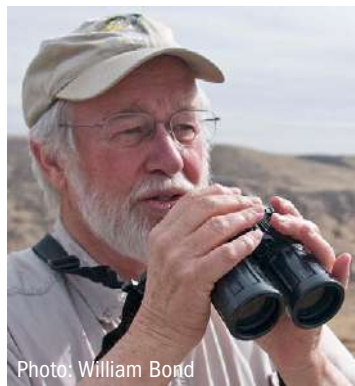


Photo: William Bond

From the President

Chuck Hundertmark

A few months ago, I was scrambling to meet the deadline for the president's column in *The Lark Bunting*.

I wanted to check the accuracy of my memory of people I knew in the Lancaster County Bird Club in the 1960s.

Of course, I went to that source of all truth and knowledge, the internet. I checked the web site for the Lancaster County Bird Club. I was disappointed to find nothing about the two people whose activity in the club I was researching.

It was quite a contrast to what I can learn on the DFO web site. Want to know if

Ruth Wheeler was involved when the Colorado Bird Club was founded in 1935?

On the DFO web site, you'll find her name among the charter members listed in the minutes of the club's first meeting. There too, you'll find that Robert J. Niedrach appears first on the list of charter members.

Wondering if Ruth Wheeler was still active in 1965? In the first issue of *The Lark Bunting* you'll learn that she joined three of the club's field trips that year. But she missed the trip to Rocky Mountain National Park that Bob Spencer was on. It's easy to find that issue of the newsletter on the web site.

When we're in the midst of our day-to-day activities as part of DFO, we don't think much about creating a historical record. It's not on our minds that 10, 20 or 50 years from now somebody may need to know what was going on in DFO in 2017. Yet institutional memory is as important to organizations, including bird clubs, as our personal memories are to individuals.

Institutional memories reside in part with people. But individuals come and go, and human memory can get fuzzy with time. That's why minutes of meetings, archives, and newsletters become important sources for institutional memories.

In recent years, Kay Niyo and Debbie James have been giving us complete and accurate records of our board meetings. Those are the foundation of a sound historical record.

Since 1965, we've also seen the completeness and quality of the record in *The Lark Bunting* grow. Fifty years from now, if some club member wants to know where the Big Year idea came from, it will be found in last month's issue of the newsletter.

It's easy to underestimate the importance of the club secretary, newsletter editor, and historian. In fact, many clubs don't even have a historian. DFO has been fortunate to have had a historian for many years. Most recently, Kris Haglund has elevated our historical record to the professional level.

As we celebrate our outstanding field trips and great monthly programs as the hallmarks of DFO's service to members, it's important to remember all the other elements that makes this a great bird club.

The Big Year brings to bear our club knowledge and depends on the field trip leaders to make trips happen. But all our eyes and ears, and our good spirits, are needed to bring the year to its fullness. Each field trip and the whole year are team efforts. Come and be a part of it.

I am personally looking forward to adding several new state species to my Colorado list, as the Big Year outings will help me to visit new places. Trips are planned to the four corners of the state and, hopefully, multiple outings to the northeast and southeast parts of the state for their specialties.

We will have some trips out far west, south to Pueblo and beyond, and north to Larimer. We will target the mountains when the times are right. We hope to offer some overnight trips. And, of course, we will pay close attention to birding throughout the Denver Metro Area.

Think about it: Scott's Oriole, Grace's Warbler, Canyon Towhee, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Black Swift, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Greater Sage-Grouse, Upland Sandpiper, Hepatic Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Piping Plover, Black Rosy-Finch, Field Sparrow, White-winged Scoter, Boreal Owl, Lucy's Warbler, Sprague's Pipit, and the list goes on with rare warblers, shorebirds, and more.

This is a warm invitation to come and experience the fun and challenge of DFOs Big Year. Come out on field trips. Choose trips to new places. Come out more often than usual. Enjoy vicarious thrills tracking progress on the [website](#) and here in *The Lark Bunting*.

Now we get to imagine, what will be our great memories of birding in 2018?

eBird Tip of the Month: *Find that bird*

Gregg Goodrich

Say you want to find a Gambel's Quail in Colorado. Go to [eBird.org](#) and click on the "Explore Data" tab. Now select "Species Maps" on the left of the screen.

Enter Gamble's Quail in the "Species" search field, Colorado in the "Location" search field and check the Show Points Sooner box in lower right of screen. You will see colored squares where the birds have been seen.

Zoom in to find blue hotspots (30+ days old) and red hotspots (more recent). Click on the hotspots to see dates, numbers, observers and checklists for the hotspot. Click on "Explore Hotspot" in upper right of this screen to get additional data on this hotspot.

On this screen above the hotspot name you will see "Hotspot Map". Click on it for a new map with a window where you can click on the directions tab. Now go get that special bird!

Field Trips

Continued from page 2

Barr Lake State Park Sunday, January 7

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Ira Sanders (Email: zroadrunner14@gmail.com
Phone: 303-278-7172)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the Barr Lake SP Visitor Center. State Parks pass or day pass required.

Trip may be 3/4 day depending on birds and weather. Trip can be easily modified to be accessible for a person with a disability. Beginners are welcome.

Aurora Reservoir and Prairie Roads (Arapahoe County)

Tuesday, January 9

7:00 AM - 2:00 PM

David Suddjian (Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the northeast corner of Parker Rd and Quincy Ave in Aurora; on the south edge of the parking lot opposite Denver Mattress.

We will search for rare to uncommon winter gulls, then decide where to go for the rest of the trip, possibly venturing to Cherry Creek SP (entry fee or state parks pass required).

Prospect Park (Wheat Ridge Greenbelt)

Saturday, January 13

9:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Jackie King (Email: jackie.king@ccd.edu
Phone: 720-381-3314)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: From I-70 exit 267, take Kipling south about 3/4 mile and turn right (west) on 44th Avenue. Go one mile west.

Continued on page 4

Field Trips

Continued from page 3

Look for the entrance to Prospect Park on your left (south). Meet just inside the park in the lot right next to Prospect Lake.

This is a trip with easy walking and accessible for mobility impaired individuals. Good trip for novice birders and new members.

South Platte River Trail at E 88th Ave and I-76 Sunday, January 14 8:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Mark Amershek (Email: mamershek@msn.com
Phone: 303-329-8646)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 16

Directions: Meet at the parking area at 88th Ave and South Platte River Trail.

We will see lots of ducks, a few raptors, and some hardy winter residents. Hike along paved trail and occasionally in the adjacent mud for up to 3 miles.

Cherry Creek SP Wetlands Loop (Arapahoe County) Sunday, January 14 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Karen von Saltza & Bill Wuerthele (Email: kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Phone: 303-941-4881)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet at the Prairie Loop lot in Cherry Creek SP. State Parks pass or day pass required.

This is a half day of walking that passes through most of the important habitats found in the park over a distance of about 3 miles. Trails could be slippery or muddy. We often have icy trails in winter. Beginning birders are welcome.

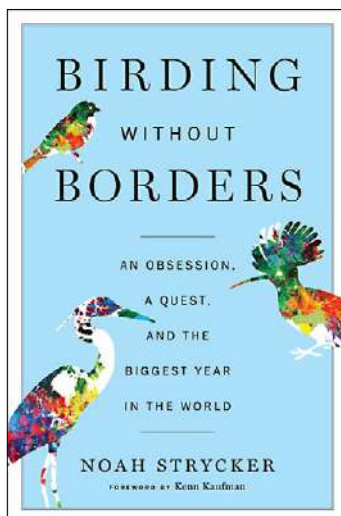
First Creek at Denver Open Space Monday, January 15 7:30 AM - 11:30 AM

Patrick O'Driscoll (Email:

Continued on next page

Book Review: *Birding without Borders*

Kayleen A. Niyo



Birding without Borders: An obsession, a quest, and the biggest year in the world

by Noah Strycker

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, New York 2017

326 pages

Hardcover \$27.00

In 2015, Noah Strycker became the first person to spot and list 6,042 world bird species in one year. On a barebones budget, he traveled to all seven continents and 41 countries with only a backpack and one change of clothes.

He spent several months using [Birding Pal](#), a birding website for travelers, and contact-

ing birding friends around the world to plan an itinerary and make birding arrangements in advance. He met and birded with a local birder and their friends at each location.

Consequently, he met and made hundreds of birding friends in many countries. He was treated to local customs and local foods, as well as to all the flora and fauna of each area.

Noah is a talented and entertaining writer good at interspersing behavior of exotic birds he spotted with vivid descriptions of landscapes and peoples of the areas. Although the travel pace was grueling with little rest much of the time, Noah makes the trip feel like a positive world adventure of wondrous discoveries every day.

This is Noah's third enjoyable book. Learn more on the [book website](#).

Videos of DFO programs now available

by Kris Haglund

Did you ever wish you hadn't missed that DFO program you'd been dying to see? Or, did you wish you could hear a favorite presentation again? Well, now presentations can be recorded thanks to the Audio-Visual staff of the Denver Museum of Nature & Science.

Recorded presentations are available for viewing on our [website](#). Check it out at <http://dfobirds.org/Programs/Past.aspx>. Click on the arrow symbol to the right of the program listing that you wish to view, then scroll down to see the video. Enjoy!!

Some programs are not recorded by request of the presenter. Others can't be recorded because they are not held in one of the DMNS theater venues. Otherwise, we look forward to bringing you many more DFO programs in this convenient format.



Burrowing Owl. *James Esten*

Thank you for your contribution to our Research, Education, and Conservation Grant Fund: Robert Beck, Renee and Dan Brachear, Linda and C. Raymond Clark, Judy and Rick Creswell, Doris Cruze, Ann Sprague and Jo-Ann Garavaglia, Roy Hohn, Paul Slingsby, Harriet Stratton, Mary Ann Tavery, Suzanne and Bill Wuerthele

Field Trips

Continued from page 4

patodrisk@gmail.com Phone: 303-885-6955)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: From East Denver take 56th Ave east toward Pena Blvd. First Creek parking lot is just before Pena on your left (north).

Monday trip of the MLK Jr. Day holiday. Bring a scope if you have one. Expect to walk 2-3 miles on flat-surfaced paths and paved trail. No restrooms at this location; closest facilities are on Tower Road (Green Valley Ranch, King Soopers) and East 40th (Montbello).

Nebraska Panhandle

Saturday, January 20

6:00 AM - 7:00 PM

Amber Carver (Email: caramb22@gmail.com Phone: 310-483-5721)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Colorado Parks and Wildlife Office, 6060 Broadway, Denver.

Visit the Lake Minatare State Recreation Area, an important waterfowl wintering site that is closed to the public October 15 - January 15. Plan to meet at the CPW at 6, arrange carpooling, and leave promptly at 6:10. Bring a scope if you have one. Two-way radios would be much appreciated.

Bobcat Ridge Natural Area

Saturday, January 20

8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Chuck Hundertmark (Email: chundertmark8@gmail.com Phone: 303-604-0531)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at the Park and Ride, US 287 and Niwot Road.

Continued on page 6

Field Trips

Continued from page 5

We'll carpool 50 minutes to the Bobcat Ridge Natural Area to search for American Woodcock. We will either walk the four-mile Valley Loop Trail or drive to other Larimer County hotspots. Leader will send details week of trip.

Pueblo and Cañon City Areas Sunday, January 21

6:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Gregg Goodrich (Email: GreggGoodrich@gmail.com
Phone: 303-655-9135)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the Safe-way on Lincoln Ave and Yosemite (1 mile west of I-25 on the north side of Lincoln), Lone Tree CO.

This Trip will be similar to Joey Kellner's January 1st trip. Leader will contact participants the week prior to the trip.

Front Range Owling Monday, January 22

4:00 PM - 10:00 PM

David Suddjian (Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meet at the Home Depot at 4277 S Eldridge St, Morrison.

Our owling locations will likely be located in Jefferson or Douglas counties. We will focus on Northern Pygmy-Owl and Northern Saw-whet Owl. Plan for standing in the cold and short walks in the dark.

Harriman Lake Saturday, January 27

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Edmund J Holub (Email: edmund.holub@gmail.com)

Continued on next page

Last Month's Program: *Flammulated Owl*

Tim Johnson

DFO "strigiphiles" and a very encouraging number of guests gathered at DMNS on November 27 to hear "Fall Ecology of the Flammulated Owl", presented by graduate students Max Ciaglo and Ross Calhoun of Colorado College.

This was the fourth time in 2017 that the monthly meeting focused on owls. Ciaglo and Calhoun are participating in Dr. Brian Linkhart's long-term study of Flammulated Owls (aka - Flams), which Dr. Linkhart described to DFO in December, 2013.

Complementing Dr. Linkhart's studies of Flam long-distance migration to Mexico and Central America, Ciaglo and Calhoun looked at owl activity at a Linkhart study area at the beginning of fall migration.

They began by summarizing Flam characteristics. Averaging 60 grams in weight, it is the second smallest North American owl after the Elf Owl. An obligate cavity nester heavily indebted to flickers, it is insectivorous, with moths as a major prey item.

It likes mid-elevation dry ponderosa forests and is, therefore, sensitive to fire. It is particularly threatened by high-intensity fires following long-term fire suppression activities. Owls arrive in Colorado in mid-May and owlets are gaining independence by August. Migration starts in September.

Knowledge of Flam migration destinations and routes is spotty. Before real data existed, it was believed that Flams survived winter in one of three ways: entering a state of torpor, being "facultative carnivores" that eat small rodents, or by engaging in elevational migration.

Vagrant owls, like those appearing on oil rigs in the Gulf of Mexico, and the discovery of latitudinal changes in wing size suggested that migrant populations might exist. Some Flam winter migrants were located to southern Mexico through the use of geolocation technology. Unfortunately, since these devices must be recovered, only a few recaptured birds have supplied detailed migration data.

Ciaglo and Calhoun began their migration study thinking that migrant Flams might use low-elevation Pinyon-Juniper forests since, being warmer, more insect prey could be available.

Initial efforts at capturing migrant owls in such habitat in southern Colorado yielded no owls. However, when the study was relocated to a breeding habitat study area, many more owls were caught.

Over a 4-year period (2013-2016), 216 owls were caught, banded if necessary, and weighed. Samples of blood and feathers were taken. Age was estimated by looking at their feathers. Old and new feathers fluoresce differently under ultraviolet light.

Sixty-five birds were owls banded previously, a very high figure, which facilitated further analysis. These were classified 4 ways:

1. Owls caught twice during the fall banding period. This group consisted of 21 owls which migrated in from parts unknown.
2. Owls caught in previous fall banding periods. Four birds had been banded the year before, one bird two years before. This group demonstrates that the

Continued on page 7

owls can show site fidelity; it remains a question if these owls used the site for breeding.

3. Owls caught in the fall but banded in the same or previous summers by others. This group contained twelve birds fledged the same year and eight adult birds fledged previously. Interestingly, the adult birds gained much more weight than the recent fledglings.

4. Eleven owls who were caught in the fall returned to breed the following summer. These birds were possibly “prospecting” in the fall, looking for territories they could potentially move into later - a very interesting hypothesis with implications for owl mentation.

Ciaglo and Calhoun emphasized how these results indicate the importance of band returns and collaboration for data interpretation. High priorities for future research include remote retrieval of data using telemetry, which would complement banding, geolocation technology, and PinPoint trackers.

They would very much like to find out from where the alien Flam in their study migrated and hope to analyze their feather samples for stable isotopes for this purpose.

Several stable (non-radioactive) isotopes, such as deuterium and carbon-13, show strong latitudinal variation in plants and animals, so analysis of these elements can indicate approximately where a bird was during the time the feather was grown.

Perhaps we can look forward to learning the results of these analyses, at a future DFO (Denver Focus on Owls) meeting.



Brown-capped Rosy-Finch. *James Esten*

Field Trips

Continued from page 6

Phone: 303-979-2194)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet at Harriman Lake Parking lot at W. Quincy & S. Kipling Pkwy.

Dress for the weather and bring a scope if you have one. We will hike about one mile on flat trail.

Greenwood Gulch and Marjorie Perry Nature Preserve Sunday, January 28

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Kevin Corwin (Email:

KevyGudGuy@aol.com

Phone: 720-482-8454)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet at the parking lot at Castlewood Park, 5601 East Orchard DRIVE (not Orchard Road) at its intersection with South Holly St. There is a portable toilet at the parking lot.

Total walking distance is about 3 miles. The trails border cattail marshes, wet meadows, and the typical High Line riparian strip. There are a couple of small ponds in the Marjorie Perry Nature Preserve at the northwest part of the loop.

Mueller State Park and Victor Tuesday, January 30

5:30 AM - 3:30 PM

David Suddjian (Email:

dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at Lowe's in Castle Rock near the outlet stores.

We will seek forest and mountain birds at Mueller, with possible Pygmy-Owl and Gray Jay; look for Rosy-Finches at Victor and Cripple Creek; and make our way back to Deckers and Sedalia, birding as we go.

64th Denver Christmas Bird Count – Saturday, December 16, 2017

by Joey Kellner

Everyone is encouraged to participate in the annual Denver Christmas Bird Count (CBC) sponsored by the National Audubon Society. Here is how it works:

- The 15-mile diameter “count circle” is subdivided into 24 “count areas” each with a leader.
- Area locations and names and phone numbers of Area Leaders are listed below.
- Participants should contact Area Leaders (see below) for count day meeting times and places.
- Or, call the Count Compiler (see below) if you would like to help in an area that still needs additional observers.
- Fee: None! So, no excuses! Come have a great time and help count birds! Beginners and experts all welcome!

POTLUCK! After a day in the field, all participants are invited to attend the compilation meeting/potluck to feast, warm up, chat with other birders, and find out how the count fared. It is a lot of fun. The compilation meeting will start at approximately 5 pm at Chatfield State Park Headquarters, located on the south side of the lake near the Heronry Overlook. A State Parks vehicle entry pass required, so please carpool if possible. Ask your Area Leader about reimbursement if that is an issue.

Feel free to bring a dish or dessert to share! Cheryl Teuton (contact information below) will coordinate the potluck. Please contact her if you plan to bring a dish to share.

Count Leader/Compiler: Joey Kellner (303-978-1748), vireo1@comcast.net

Feeder Coordinator: Bob Shade (303-975-2476), wrshade3@gmail.com

Potluck Coordinator: Cheryl Teuton (303-912-3341)

Area Number and Location	Area Leader	Phone Number
1. Red Rocks Park	Dan String	720-854-5911
2. Lower Bear Creek	Michael Kiessig	303-909-5169
2A. Bear Creek Lake Park	Mark Amershek	303-329-8646
3. Bow Mar/Marston	Bill Hopping	303-809-3053
4A. Lower South Platte - East	Ed Holub	303-979-2194
4B. Lower South Platte - West	Dick Schottler	303-278-8035
5. Highline Ditch	Nancy Crews	303-842-2833
6. Plum Creek	Norm Erthal	303-917-2596
7A. Middle South Platte - West	Charlie Lawrence	303-795-9126
7B. Middle South Platte - East	Urling Kingery	303-814-2723
8. Chatfield State Park	Joey Kellner	303-978-1748
9. Upper South Platte *	Jill Holden	720-288-4018
10. Lower Deer Creek (Chatfield Arboretum)	Riley & Heather Morris	720-666-1644
11. Upper Deer Creek	Paul Slingsby	720-347-5169
12. Yegge Peak	Ann Bonnell	303-979-6211
13. Doublehead Mountain	Amy Davis	303-549-7759
14. North Turkey Creek	Ed Furlong	303-956-8321
15. Indian Hills	Dick Prickett	303-674-0217
16. Upper Bear Creek	Laura Steadman	843-319-5086
17. Ken Caryl Ranch	Tom Bush	303-919-5040
18. Garrison Gate	Bob Shade	303-975-2476
19. Morrison/Willowbrook	Chris Gilbert	804-214-1508
20. Willow Creek	Doris Cruze	303-798-8072
21. Mount Lindo/Willow Springs	Bob Shade	303-975-2476

* to participate in this area, you must contact the area leader no later than Monday, December 12th.

Denver Field Ornithologists

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Kristine Haglund	303-906-8044	kahaglund1@aol.com
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FIELD TRIP SCHEDULERS

January	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
February	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
March	Bill Wuerthele	303-333-2519
April	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
May	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
June	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
July	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
August	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
September	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
October	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
November	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
December	Jill Boice	303-863-7580

DFO logo by Radeaux

COMMITTEE DIRECTORS

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The Lark Bunting Photo Editor	Jim Esten	jcesten@gmail.com
The Lark Bunting Designer	Debbie Marshall, Marshall Publishing	marshallpublish@gmail.com

LINKS AND CONTACTS

DFO Facebook	Photos and discussion	facebook.com/groups/dfobirds
COBirds	Internet bird-sighting discussion list	cobirds@googlegroups.com
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Tuesday Birders	Mary Keithler	mkeithler@yahoo.com
	Backup contact, Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net

DFO MEETING LOCATION

Meetings open to public held each month except May, June, July, and December at the Ricketson Auditorium, Denver Museum of Nature and Science. Enter in the north side security/employee entrance and tell the guard that you are there for the DFO meeting. Cancellations: check <http://dfobirds.org> or COBirds.

The Lark Bunting

DFO publishes *The Lark Bunting* monthly. Please submit newsletter content by the first of the month to Sharon Tinianow, editor, sharontinianow@gmail.com, 303-562-8993. Contact Sharon Tinianow with questions or comments: sharontinianow@gmail.com, 303-562-8993. DFO encourages readers to electronically submit original articles, nature writing, or photos (JPEG [* .jpg]) for *The Lark Bunting*. Please state if the material submitted has been published elsewhere requiring publisher's permission. The editor reserves the right to select suitable articles for publication and to edit any selected articles. © 2017 Denver Field Ornithologists. All Rights Reserved.

Welcome to new DFO members: Chuck Aid, Evergreen; Kevin Ash, Colorado Springs; Katherine Blackett, Wheat Ridge; Mark Cary, Denver; Kathy Dunnewald, Arvada; Wendi Fisher, Arvada; Jan Gorski, Highlands Ranch; Martha Ouellette, Golden; Harriet Stratton, Littleton

Upcoming Speakers

Garth Spellman Jan. 29

Chris Wood Feb. 19

Francis Commercon Mar. 19

Nathan Pieplow Apr. 16

Denver Field Ornithologists Membership Application

Join online at <http://dfobirds.org>, or by mail.

DFO memberships expire Dec. 31; valid for the next year if paid after Oct. 1.

DFO provides grants to individuals or organizations whose mission includes ornithological research, education, and conservation.

DFO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

- | | |
|---|----------|
| ☐ Annual family membership (electronic <i>The Lark Bunting</i>) | \$ 25 |
| ☐ Annual family membership (mailed <i>The Lark Bunting</i>) | \$ 40 |
| ☐ Student membership (age ≤ 26) | \$ 10 |
| ☐ Research, Education, & Conservation Grant Fund donation | \$ _____ |

Total \$ _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

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Email (legible) _____

(Must include for electronic *The Lark Bunting*)

Check payable to DFO and send to Sue Summers, 2364 W Costilla Ave, Littleton, CO 80120-3502

'Birding without Borders'

Find That Bird!

Collective Memories

Featured This Month

Denver Field Ornithologists
10826 E. Maplewood Place
Englewood, CO 80111-5742

The Lark Bunting



The Lark Bunting

DENVER FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS/FEBRUARY 2018/VOL 54 NO 2

HTTP://DFOBIRDS.ORG

Field Trips

Register for DFO field trips on the [website](#) or contact the leader directly. Bring your own binoculars, water, snacks or lunch, and sunscreen. Dress for the weather.

More detailed directions and descriptions of each trip can be found on the website.

Please be considerate and delete your reservation if you are unable to attend a trip for which you have registered.

NOTE: [DFO Big Year 2018 Rules and Regulations](#) can be found on the website.

**Southeastern Colorado
Saturday, February 3 -
Sunday, February 4
6:00 AM - 6:00 PM**

Amber Carver (Email:
caramb22@gmail.com
Phone: 310-483-5721)

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous
Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Meet at the Safeway on Lincoln Avenue and Yosemite, Lone Tree, CO.

This is a two-day trip. The first day (Sat, Feb 3) will involve birding at Higbee Cemetery, Vogel Canyon, and the upland areas in the Comanche National Grassland.

Participants will have options for overnight accommodations. The second day (Sun, Feb 4) will involve hiking down into Picketwire Canyon as far as the Dolores Mission (7.2-mile round-trip).

Continued on page 2

Monthly meetings: January, February

NOTE: DFO monthly meetings are no longer on the fourth Monday of each month. Check *The Lark Bunting* or DFO website for dates. All meetings in 2018 will take place at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, Rick- etson Auditorium, beginning at 7 PM. Enter through the north side security/ employee entrance and tell the guard you are here for the DFO meeting.

Monday, January 29; 7:00 PM

Iconic Colorado Bird Imperiled: What's happening to the Rosy-Finches?

**Garth Spellman, Curator of Ornithology,
Denver Museum of Nature & Science**

While Colorado has no truly endemic (found in no other states) birds, two species come pretty close—the Gunnison Sage Grouse and the Brown-capped Rosy-Finch.

Both of these Rocky Mountain state “endemics” are species of conservation concern. The former was the first new species described from the lower 48 states in slightly more than a century in 2000.

Because the Gunnison Sage Grouse occupies a landscape that is prized for energy development and was a game species, the bird has been extensively studied, culminating in its new taxonomic rank and the implementation of captive breeding programs to resurrect its declining wild populations.

The Brown-capped Rosy-Finch, in comparison, has not been extensively

Continued on page 4



Garth Spellman is the January program speaker.

Field Trips

Continued from page 1

Northeastern Raptor Tour

Saturday, February 3

6:30 AM - 6:00 PM

Joey Kellner (Email: vireo1@comcast.net Phone: 303-978-1748)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Meet at the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Office, 6060 N Broadway.

Bring lunch for a full day of driving and birding in eastern Colorado.

Front Range Owling

Monday, February 5

4:30 PM - 9:00 PM

David Suddjian (Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meeting location will be announced by the leader at least two days before the trip date.

Owling locations TBD, likely in Jefferson or Douglas counties. Plan for standing in the cold and short walks in the dark.

Barr Lake State Park

Saturday, February 10

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Bob Shade (Email: wrshade3@gmail.com Phone: 303-975-2476)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet at the Barr Lake SP Visitor Center. State Parks pass or day pass required.

We will look for Winter waterfowl and raptors, including owls, in the shelter belt. Trail around lake is accessible for a person with a disability. Lunch optional. Beginners are welcome.

Continued on next page

Picture this

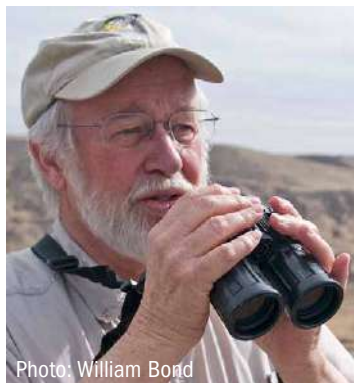


Photo: William Bond

From the President

Chuck Hundertmark

with the idea of natural selection. How could those amazing colors promote survival?

When I returned from Mexico and looked at this photo, I wondered if those fingerlike projections in the tree were actually fruit. My good friends Google and Wikipedia confirmed that they are. Looking through the related photo galleries, I was impressed with how many birds, in addition to the toucan, eat the Cecropia fruit.

Then there are the new tail feathers. Do those new feathers erupting from the white sheaths indicate tail molt or replacement of feathers that were lost in a near miss with a predator?

We often look at a bird photo for its aesthetic value. When someone says, "Wow, that's a great photo!" it confirms for us that the image is pleasing in its own right. But a good photo, or even a passable one, can offer a lot of infor-

Continued on page 3



Keel-billed Toucan. Chuck Hundertmark

PRESIDENT, continued from page 2

mation about a bird and open interesting sets of questions. In that way, photos and other artistic renderings of birds make an important contribution to our thinking and conversations about birds.

DFO opened important channels for our visual communication when *The Lark Bunting* began publishing color photos and more recently with the launching of the DFO Facebook page. In 2017, we took another step forward when *Lark Bunting* editor Sharon Tinianow invited Jim Esten to take on the role of photo editor.

Jim's role is quickly expanding. Big Year Coordinator David Suddjian has plans to establish a photo archive for Big Year pictures of birds and birders on our Big Year field trips. Jim has established a Google Drive account where photos submitted by our photographers can be stored.

If you are a photographer and would like to make your photos part of our conversation about birds, you can submit them to Jim Esten at jcesten@gmail.com. They will be stored on the Google Drive where editors of DFO's web and print publications can access them. You can submit photos you've edited yourself or your unedited photos. Jim is an excellent editor as I hope you'll agree the toucan photo attests.

And, as always, you can post your pix to the DFO Facebook page.

Incidentally, my new camera rig passed the test and I'll be adding a few of its photos to the DFO Facebook page from time to time.

Welcome to new DFO members: Mary Klinnert and Allen Adinoff, Greenwood Village; Burke Angstman, Lakewood; Kellan Barr, Denver; Helen Berkman, Denver; Sandy Blair, Boulder; Margo Breen, BowMar; R. Dale Brown, Denver; James Cherney and Linda Cherney, Wheat Ridge; Leslie Clemensen, Parker; Lisa Edwards, Palmer Lake; Teresa Gurth, Parker; Jennifer Hensley, Arvada; Thomas Holub, Littleton; Wyeth Jackson, Brighton; Thelma Jimenez, Denver; Christopher Kellerman, Centennial; Claire and Bob Knapp, Littleton.

Michael Lamson, Boulder; Charles Lawrence, Centennial; Linda MacIntyre, Denver; Linda Martin, Henderson; Max Miller, Denver; Becky Moores, Castle Rock; Sherrill and David Pantle, Baltimore; Paula Bauer and Dale Pate, Littleton; Ben, Soren, & Orion Dinsmore and Tracy Rackauskas, Denver; Rebecca and Ronald Richey, Denver; Niña Routh, Denver; Schreitz and Bill Schreitz, Centennial; Elaine Wagner, Greenwood village; Ruth Wagner; Robert and Allison Waters, Aurora

Field Trips

Continued from page 2

Boulder County: From the Mountains to the Plains

Saturday, February 10

8:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Paula Hansley (Email:

plhansley@gmail.com

Phone: 720-890-2628)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Cinnebarre Theaters parking lot off Dillon Rd in Louisville.

Carpool to Nederland, check out feeders, Mtn. Research Station, and Allenspark. Other places TBD between Nederland and Ward. Bring lunch and wear warm clothes.

Denver City Park (Denver County)

Sunday, February 11

7:15 AM - 11:30 AM

Patrick O'Driscoll (Email:

patodrisk@gmail.com

Phone: 303-885-6955 (cell))

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 14

Directions: Meet at parking strip on north side of Ferril Lake in City Park.

We'll look for the first Double crested Cormorants and check the waterfowl flocks for rare geese and ducks. We'll walk 2 miles on level paths. Dress for the weather.

Cherry Creek SP Wetlands Loop (Arapahoe County)

Sunday, February 11

9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Karen von Saltza & Bill Wuerthele (Email: kvonsaltza@yahoo.com Phone: 303-941-4881)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet at the Prairie Loop lot in Cherry Creek SP. State Parks pass or day pass required.

Continued on page 4

Field Trips

Continued from page 3

This is a half-day of walking that passes through most of the important habitats found in the park over a distance of about 3 miles. Trails could be slippery or muddy. We often encounter icy trails in winter.

Lunch is optional. Beginning birders are welcome.

Park County Explorations

Monday, February 12

7:00 AM - 1:00 PM

David Suddjian (Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meet at King Soopers in Aspen Park off Highway 285 at 25637 Conifer Road.

An informal series of trips to explore beautiful Park County's avifauna and interesting ecology. This trip will seek the winter mountain birds, including possibly 3 species of Rosy-Finches.

Prospect Park

(Wheat Ridge Greenbelt)

Saturday, February 17

9:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Jackie King (Email: jackie.king@ccd.edu Phone: 720-381-3314)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet just inside the park in the lot right next to Prospect Lake.

This is a trip with easy walking, accessible for mobility impaired individuals. Lunch is optional. Good trip for novice birders and new members.

Continued on next page

MONTHLY MEETINGS, continued from page 1

studied. What little census work has been done on the species suggests that populations have declined by as much as 95% over the past 50 years.

In terms of mean elevation above sea level, Colorado is the highest state and Rosy-Finches are the highest breeding bird in the state. They like to breed in rocky crevices in talus slopes and, occasionally, in abandoned mines above tree line.

They feed on insects and seeds on snowfields. Most birders in Colorado are perhaps more familiar with these charismatic finches during their occasional low elevation visits when winter storms force them from their preferred mountain top homes.

They will crowd backyard feeders, often congregating with their close kin, the Black Rosy-Finch and the Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, which migrate to Colorado in the winter.

Climate change research tells us that changes will first effect species in extreme environments, such as arctic and alpine species. Thus, it is not shocking that Rosy-Finch populations have experienced decline. However, the exact causes of their decline need to be ascertained if we are to conserve the species.

Dr. Spellman will discuss a large collaborative research project that aims to address many unanswered questions about Rosy-Finch evolution, natural history, ecology, and conservation.

The work involves extensive fieldwork across the Rosy-Finch range and employs old research methods, like banding and ecological surveys, with new methods, like genomics and isotopes.

He will also share how DFO members can assist with the work and be part of the goal to preserve one of Colorado's "endemic" birds.

Monday, February 19 7:00 pm

eBird and the Elephant's Child

**Chris Wood, Assistant Director of Information Science,
Cornell Lab of Ornithology**

Chris Wood got his start birding along Colorado's Front Range with DFO's Joey Kellner. His first public presentation was at a DFO meeting in 1994. He and his team at Cornell have developed a novel approach to citizen science by engaging diverse communities interested in watching birds while developing partnerships with scientists in a wide variety of fields.

Already, over 500,000 people around the world have taken part in reporting observations to eBird – from community members in the Yucatán Peninsula, to tour guides in Costa Rica, to researchers in India. This diversity in participation has given us an unprecedented look into bird migration, habitat use and distribution. Ultimately, conserving biodiversity, including birds and their ecosystems, is about protecting livelihoods and ensuring a sustainable future for us all.

The Lark Bunting needs you!

The Lark Bunting is seeking articles and photographs for publication in future editions. Articles can be about anything of interest to the birding community, from book reviews to descriptions of field trips you have been on, to advice about equipment, and much more.

The deadline for *The Lark Bunting* is the first of every month. Send your submissions to Sharon Tinianow, *Lark Bunting* editor, at sharontinianow@gmail.com.

Photographs of birds and of birders on DFO trips are also welcome. Photographs must be sharp and should be sent as an image file, not embedded in a Word or other document. Send them to Jim Esten, the new photo editor, at jcesten@gmail.com. If you are sending both an article and an accompanying photograph, send to both Sharon and Jim.

Articles and photographs will be used only for *The Lark Bunting* and authors and photographers will be credited. Any edits to your submissions will be discussed with you prior to publication. We look forward to hearing from you.

eBird Tip of the Month: Bar Charts

Gregg Goodrich

Find out what birds are in a location for anytime of the year and the likelihood of their occurrence with Bar Charts in eBird.

On ebird.org go to the Explorer tab and select Bar Charts on the lower left of this screen. The next screen asks you to choose a location. On the bottom half of this screen you can choose “Bird Conservation Regions” or if you are logged in, your personal “My Locations” will show as an option. Hit continue and you will get your Bar Graph. If you choose the top half, then select a country and state on the left and on the right, select either Entire Region, County(s), Hot Spot(s) or Important Bird Area(s). Then Continue to get your Bar Graph.

There are four bars in each month representing four weeks in the month for each species. The 4th weekly bar collects the additional days of the month if more than 28. The height of the bar indicates the likelihood of a species during a week. There are 9 possibilities for a height of a bar. The full height of number 9 means 60-100 percent chance of finding the species. The smallest bar number 1 means 0-0.3 percent chance of finding the species. All other heights are between these ranges. If the area of the bar is shaded gray, then there is no checklist for that week. To have a “complete” Bar Graph for a location (without any gray areas) there must be a checklist for each week. So, if you have a yard or patch location with gray areas, you need to do checklists for the weeks where the cells are gray.

Bar Graphs are a great way to learn about that new location you are going to visit. You can learn what species you are likely to see and what the likelihood of finding that species will be. The higher the bar, the better the chance of finding it. And if there is no bar, there is practically no chance. If the area is gray, it is unknown because no checklist has been submitted for that week. Try to bird a location during grayed out weeks and submit a checklist to get the location closer to a “Completed” state.

Bar Graphs are a great way to learn about the migration patterns of a species at a certain location. When do the first show? When are they most prominent? When do they leave? Become the expert on a location by studying its Bar Graph!

Field Trips

Continued from page 4

Tamarack State Wildlife Area and Associated Prairie Sunday, February 18

6:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Chris Goulart (Email: cgoulart001@comcast.net
Phone: 586-764-2126)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Meet at the Division of Parks and Wildlife (DPW) parking lot 6060 Broadway, Denver CO 80218.

This will be an intense trip looking for late winter prairie and eastern forest specialties. Target birds include Snow Geese, Greater Prairie Chickens, Rough-legged Hawks, Ferruginous Hawks, Merlin, Prairie Falcons, Eastern Bluebirds, Lapland Longspurs, and Northern Cardinal.

Northern Colorado Tuesday, February 20

5:00 AM - 6:00 PM

David Suddjian (Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Maximum Participants: 15

Directions: Meet at the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Office in Denver, 6060 N Broadway.

Special guest leader: Norm Lewis. We may visit Jumbo, Red Lion, and Tamarack in the far northeast and Prewitt Reservoir closer to home. Prepare for this full day winter outing with supplies of food. It is a 3-hour drive from meeting place to the first birding site. Possible park entry fees.

Continued on page 6

Field Trips

Continued from page 5

South Platte River Trail at E 88th Ave and I-76

Saturday, February 24

8:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Mark Amershek (Email: mamershek@msn.com
Phone: 303-329-8646)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 16

Directions: Meet at the parking area at 88th Ave and South Platte River Trail.

We will see lots of ducks, a few raptors, and some hardy winter residents. Hike along paved trail and, occasionally, in the adjacent mud for up to 3 miles.

Sloan's Lake

Saturday, February 24

9:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Jackie King (Email: jackie.king@ccd.edu Phone: 720-381-3314)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet on the north side of Sloan's Lake near the boat house just south of W. 25th Ave at Wolff.

We will look for any waterfowl available, resident landbirds, and any other winged friends we can find. Lunch is optional.

Front Range Owling

Saturday, February 24

4:30 PM - 9:00 PM

David Suddjian (Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meeting location will be announced by the leader at least two days before the trip date.

Owling locations will be announced shortly before the trip, likely in Jefferson or Douglas counties. We will focus on

Continued on next page

Big Year 2018—first flights

by David Suddjian

Great Horned Owl. There, perched on a light pole as we zoomed past, heading south along I-25 toward Colorado Springs. It was Bird #1 for DFO Big Year 2018. Certainly, a more auspicious start than the Rock Pigeons and Common Ravens that followed soon after and, hopefully, the owl is representative of the birding wisdom, watchfulness, and style that DFO will bring to bear to make our Big Year effort a great one.

And we did begin in style, with a full day outing to Cañon City and Pueblo Reservoir. Joey Kellner expertly guided this trip, making his annual New Year's Day outing into a DFO field trip. At our very first stop in Colorado Springs we added the stake out Red-breasted Sapsucker—Colorado's first, and thus a species never before recorded on a DFO trip.

More highlights followed: Juniper Titmouse, Curve-billed Thrasher, Scaled

Continued on page 7



Thank you for your contribution to our Research, Education, and Conservation Grant Fund: Tom Pool and Kitsi Atkinson, Mary Beverly, Diane Birks, Chris Blakeslee, Mark Peyton and Susan Blansett, Paul Welschinger and Kate Brannan, R. Dale Brown, Karel Buckley, Tom and Mary Cay Burger, Will Burt, Jeff and Diane Carter, Carol Cochran, Jean and Charlie Curlee, Jeff Dawson, Laurie Duke, Anne Esson, Lee and Linda Farrell, Carol and Clint Flynn, Von Fransen, Mary Geder, Janet and A.J. Gest, Audrey Gilden, Betty Glass, Newell Grant, Fionn and Kristin Gruebmeier, Kristine Haglund, Sue Hall, Georgia Hart, J.B. Hayes, Holly Heuer, David Hill, Thomas Holub, Marjorie Jannotta and Chuck Hundertmark, Wyeth Jackson, Debbie James.

Tina Jones, Mary Keithler, Sharon Kermiet, Urling and Hugh Kingery, Liz Kreider, Michael Lamson, Judy Lane, Karen Clark and Joe Lupfer, Linda MacIntyre, Elissa McAlear, Rex McGehee, Larry Modesitt, Michael Wilson and Barbara Nabors, Patrick O'Driscoll, Richard O'Leary, Jim Petri and Christie Owens, Pat and Barney Poole, Pablo Quezada, Diane Roberts, Peggy Roberts, Joe Roller, Micki and Bob Shade, Lori Sharp, Danny Roohr and Betsy Shaw, Sondra Bland and Bob Spencer, Jeff Stroup, Sue Summers, Ronald Villiotti, Bobbi Vollmer, Jan Justice Waddington, Robert and Allison Waters, Laura and Wayne Wathen, Bea Weaver, Karen and John Weslar, Joan and Jack Whiting, Kiki Widjaja, Liz and Lynn Willcockson, Jeremy Winick, Scott Yarberry, Mary Zick

Quail, Canyon Towhee, and Rufous-crowned Sparrow. We weren't in the Denver Metro Area anymore.

A flock of over 80 Mountain Bluebirds bedecked junipers along Barret Road. We found a Black Phoebe in a pasture and several Williamson's Sapsuckers in pines in parks and cemeteries.

We dipped on a stake out Prairie Warbler below Pueblo Dam, but finished at the reservoir shivering in the growing cold as we spied Great Black-backed Gull, Common Loon, Red-necked Grebe, and more.

We ended the trip with 86 species for Day 1 of Big Year 2018. It was a strong start for the numbers, but these full day outings really reveal how our camaraderie in the field makes the day. As one participant reflected afterwards, "The people make the trip and today was super..."

January 2nd found DFO gathered again, this time in the western Metro Area. In fact, we were gathered on my front porch at Ken Caryl in Jefferson County. We assembled just before bird activity was to begin at my feeding stations, waiting in the 13-degree chill for a local star to brighten the morning. A wintering Harris's Sparrow appeared right on cue and was gratefully appreciated by all. I think we all felt a little warmer.

From there we hopped, skipped, and jumped to a few other sites following up on recent reports of rare birds. A trio of Trumpeter Swans with a Tundra Swan at Valmont Reservoir in Boulder thrilled everyone with a nice comparison. These birds were quite close, unlike the typical long-distance swan encounter.

We had a fine study of a young Northern Shrike perched above in a cottonwood, while several young Bald Eagles spurred some birders into brave attempts to figure out how many years old each one was.

Our day concluded with a search for Standley Lake's Snowy Owl, but it had already departed. You can't catch them all. But we added nine new Big Year species, notching up to 95 species "for the year" so far.

But the species count is just one of the fruits and measures of our Big Year. New members have joined DFO in conjunction with registering for these first trips of the year. Birders visited new places and saw new birds. I added five birds to my Colorado list on the January 1 trip! Wendy reported adding five life birds on the January 2nd trip. Well-traveled Colorado birder Sue was pleased to visit a new place (Coors Ponds) on the same trip. Conversations on the trips often looked forward to the upcoming trips that folks had registered for. The spirit runs high and we are having fun.



Merlin. Cheri Phillips

Field Trips

Continued from page 6

the Northern Pygmy-Owl and Northern Saw-whet Owl. Plan for standing in the cold and short walks in the dark.

Fort Collins Grandview Cemetery Sunday, February 25

9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Gregg Goodrich (Email: GreggGoodrich@gmail.com
Phone: 303-655-9135)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at corner of Grandview Avenue and W Mountain Avenue on the east side of the cemetery.

Good site for potential cross-bills, owls, kinglets and sapsuckers. Bring a lunch. Feel free to head back to Denver in the afternoon if you choose.

Larimer County Tuesday, February 27

6:30 AM - 4:00 PM

David Suddjian (Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Office, 6060 N Broadway.

Explore a selection of likely reservoirs, parks, and other habitats in Larimer County seeking gulls and other waterbirds. Bring lunch and liquids and plan to carpool from our meeting spot.

What do you call a group of birds?

by Sharon Tinianow

The obvious answer to the question is “a flock.” But, some birds have acquired a unique noun, and often more than one, to describe a group of a single species.

While you hone your bird ID skills in 2018, why not also increase your knowledge of these collective nouns? Some are descriptive enough to seem obvious, others are quite puzzling, and many quite entertaining.

The first collective nouns were published around 1500 in *The Book of St. Albans*. The choice of nouns was based on folklore with a dash of humor. Which noun was assigned to which bird was at the whim of the publisher—hence, multiple names for each group of birds.

These words are still with us largely because they were published in Books of Courtesy, handbooks to educate the nobility.

When out on a DFO field trip, you might demonstrate your superior education by labeling a group of hawks a “kettle.” Be aware, though, that someone else might say a group of birds of prey should be called a “cast” or even a “cauldron.”

In winter, chickadees are a common sight and a group of them is a “banditry.” Finches hang out together in a “charm.”

The ubiquitous Canada Goose (like all the geese) is rarely alone, but prefers to gather in a “gaggle.” Where there is open water, we might encounter a “flush” of Mallards.

Crossbills congregate in a “crook-edness.” Cold winter weather may drive a “covey” of ptarmigan to lower elevations. More than one of the creeping species is called a “spiral.”



A squadron of American White Pelicans. *Jim Esten*

Heading out on an owling trip? Perhaps you will be treated to not just one owl, but a “parliament” of owls.

By next month, we can eagerly await a “gulp” of cormorants. A “cover” of coots and may soon follow.

Spring will bring a “chain” of Bobolinks, a “gross” of grosbeaks, and an “omniscience” of godwits. An “asylum” of loons and a “whirligig” of phalaropes may migrate through.

A “cotillion” of terns will be a welcome sight. A “confusion” of warblers is also likely. Look for a “spring” of teals, too.

In summer, we can enjoy a “siege” of herons, a “squabble” of gulls, and a “glittering” of hummingbirds.

A “squadron” of pelicans will signal a return to warmer temperatures. The cries of a “realm” of kingfish-

ers will become common again. A “chime” of wrens is something to look forward to seeing, as well as hearing.

Out on the plains we are likely to encounter a “corral” of cowbirds and a “congregation” of plovers. A “quarrel” of sparrows should be easy to spot, as well as a “gulp” of swallows. With some luck, we may even see a “vatican” of cardinals.

We will have to go to southern reaches of Colorado to encounter a “marathon” of roadrunners, but no one will have trouble spotting an “affliction” of starlings.

You may have heard that a group of crows is called a “murder.” Crows and ravens were thought to be evil, so their collective nouns reflect the folklore of the time. That being the case, what would you call one Crow? Attempted murder, of course!

Denver Field Ornithologists

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February	Chris Owens	303-772-6048
March	Bill Wuerthele	303-333-2519
April	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
May	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
June	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
July	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
August	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
September	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
October	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
November	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
December	Jill Boice	303-863-7580

DFO logo by Radeaux

COMMITTEE DIRECTORS

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Grants	Candice Johnson	candice.johnson@childrenscolorado.org
Nominating	Susan Blansett	susanblansett@gmail.com

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Web Managers (http://dfobirds.org)	Will Burt, Jim Esten, Kay Niyo	admin@dfobirds.org
The Lark Bunting Editor	Sharon Tinianow	sharontinianow@gmail.com
The Lark Bunting Photo Editor	Jim Esten	jcesten@gmail.com
The Lark Bunting Designer	Debbie Marshall, Marshall Publishing	marshallpublish@gmail.com

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DFO Facebook	Photos and discussion	facebook.com/groups/dfobirds
COBirds	Internet bird-sighting discussion list	cobirds@googlegroups.com
DMNS Liaison	Jeff Stephenson	jstephenson@dmns.org
Tuesday Birders	Mary Keithler	mkeithler@yahoo.com
	Backup contact, Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net

DFO MEETING LOCATION

Meetings open to public held each month except May, June, July, and December at the Ricketson Auditorium, Denver Museum of Nature and Science. Enter in the north side security/employee entrance and tell the guard that you are there for the DFO meeting. Cancellations: check <http://dfobirds.org> or COBirds.

The Lark Bunting

DFO publishes *The Lark Bunting* monthly. Please submit newsletter content by the first of the month to Sharon Tinianow, editor, sharontinianow@gmail.com, 303-562-8993. Contact Sharon Tinianow with questions or comments: sharontinianow@gmail.com, 303-562-8993. DFO encourages readers to electronically submit original articles, nature writing, or photos (JPEG [*.jpg]) for *The Lark Bunting*. Please state if the material submitted has been published elsewhere requiring publisher's permission. The editor reserves the right to select suitable articles for publication and to edit any selected articles. © 2017 Denver Field Ornithologists. All Rights Reserved.

Upcoming Speakers

The Denver Field Ornithologists monthly meetings are held in Ricketson Auditorium at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science in City Park.

These meetings are free and open to the public and occur from 7 to 8:30 p.m. on Mondays of each month August through April (except December).

Check below for the dates. Park on the north side of the Museum and enter in the north side security/employee entrance and tell the guard that you are there for the DFO meeting.

Occasionally, a meeting may be moved to a different location in the museum. These changes are announced in *The Lark Bunting* and posted on this website.

Garth Spellman Jan. 29
Iconic Bird Imperiled

Chris Wood Feb. 19
eBird and the Elephant's Child

Nathan Pieplow Mar. 19
End of the World: Siberian Wildlife

Francis Commercon Apr. 16
Bird Conservation in China

Denver Field Ornithologists Membership Application

Join online at <http://dfobirds.org>, or by mail.

DFO memberships expire Dec. 31; valid for the next year if paid after Oct. 1.

DFO provides grants to individuals or organizations whose mission includes ornithological research, education, and conservation.

DFO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

☐ Annual family membership (electronic <i>The Lark Bunting</i>)	\$ 25
☐ Annual family membership (mailed <i>The Lark Bunting</i>)	\$ 40
☐ Student membership (age ≤ 26)	\$ 10
☐ Research, Education, & Conservation Grant Fund donation	\$ _____
Total	\$ _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____

Email (legible) _____

(Must include for electronic *The Lark Bunting*)

Check payable to DFO and send to Sue Summers, 2364 W Costilla Ave, Littleton, CO 80120-3502

The Lark Bunting

Denver Field Ornithologists
10826 E. Maplewood Place
Englewood, CO 80111-5742

Featured This Month

Picture This

Big Year: First Flights

Gulp. Is it a Gaggle?



The Lark Bunting

DENVER FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS/MARCH 2018/VOL 54 NO 3

HTTP://DFOBIRDS.ORG

Field Trips

Register for DFO field trips on the [website](#) or contact the leader directly. Bring your own binoculars, water, snacks or lunch, and sunscreen. Dress for the weather.

More detailed directions and descriptions of each trip can be found on the website.

Please be considerate and delete your reservation if you are unable to attend a trip for which you have registered.

NOTE: [DFO Big Year 2018 Rules and Regulations](#) can be found on the website.

Cherry Creek State Park (Arapahoe County) Saturday, March 3 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Mary Keithler (Email: mkeithler@yahoo.com
Phone: 303-771-1421)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the west marina parking lot. State Parks pass or day pass required.

Look for gulls, waterfowl, and a variety of birds. Habitats include deep water, marshlands, mixed grasses, and cottonwoods. We will carpool to the various stops and walk 1-2 miles. Scopes are useful.

Denver City Park (Denver County) Sunday, March 4 6:45 AM - 11:00 AM

Patrick O'Driscoll (Email: patodrisk@gmail.com
Phone: 303-885-6955 (cell))

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 12

Continued on page 2

Monthly meetings: February, March

DFO monthly programs take place at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, Ricketson Auditorium, beginning at 7 PM. Enter through the north side security/employee entrance and tell the guard you are here for the DFO meeting.

Monday, February 19 7:00 pm

eBird and the Elephant's Child

*Chris Wood, Assistant Director of Information Science,
Cornell Lab of Ornithology*

Chris Wood got his start birding along Colorado's Front Range, mentored by Joey Kellner whom he first met at a DFO meeting in 1989. His first public presentation was at a DFO meeting in 1994 shortly before he went to college.

Much of Wood's time is now focused on eBird, which has grown from a small traditional citizen science project into a collaborative global enterprise.

He and his team have developed a novel approach to citizen science by engaging diverse communities interested in watching birds while developing partnerships with scientists in a wide variety of fields.

Collaborating with conservation biologists, quantitative ecologists, statisticians, computer scientists, GIS and informatics specialists, application developers, data administrators, and expert birdwatchers has enabled eBird to reach a global audience. Advances at the intersection of ecology, statistics, and computer science allow this team to create new species distribution models that provide accurate estimates across broad spatial and temporal scales with extremely detailed resolution.

eBird data are openly available and used by a spectrum of students, teachers, scientists, NGOs, government agencies, land managers, and policy makers.

Continued on page 4



Chris Wood is the February program speaker.

Field Trips

Continued from page 1

Directions: Meet at parking strip on north side of Ferril Lake in City Park.

We'll check on returning large wading and waterbirds, plus early-arriving migrants and the usual mix of birds in this urban oasis. Scopes may be helpful.

**Southwestern Metro Area
Tuesday, March 6
7:00 AM - 2:00 PM**

David Suddjian (Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at West Deer Creek Canyon Road near Wadsworth.

Specific birding spots will be selected the day of the trip based on what is around and the weather. We will seek a variety of birds at a handful of sites and chase rare birds that may be in the local region.

**Front Range Owling
Tuesday, March 6
4:30 PM - 9:00 PM**

David Suddjian (Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meeting location will be announced by the leader at least two days before the trip date.

Our owling locations will be announced shortly before the trip, but will likely be located in Jefferson or Douglas counties. We will focus on the Northern Pygmy-Owl and Northern Saw-whet Owl. Plan for standing in the cold and short walks in the dark.

Continued on next page

Does eBird change the birder's mind?

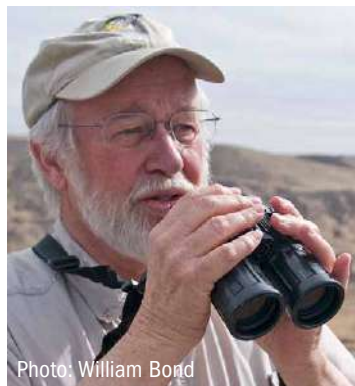


Photo: William Bord

From the President

Chuck Hundertmark

This morning I find myself on an unintended journey through the wonders of eBird. The journey began when I opened eBird to see how many species I've logged in my eBird checklists.

In two days, I leave for a birding tour in Ecuador. Since one purpose of the trip will be to add species to my life list, I was looking for my baseline count.

Fortuitously, my total was a nice round number—800 species observed. That will make the arithmetic pretty easy when I return. It's simple to find your eBird species total; you go to "My eBird" and check the

"My Stats" table. You'll also see your year and month species totals.

My year total stood at a miserly 55 species, making it clear I've been spending too much time at the computer and not enough time birding.

I have no idea what my total life list actually is. When I began birding seriously in the 1960s, I kept a simple life list at the back of my Peterson field guide. When that field guide disappeared, I recreated the list from memory in a new Peterson and continued building the list.

The next iteration of the list was in a Golden Press field guide which I still have. But I stopped adding to the list somewhere along the way. My focus shifted away from listing to my banding project and other citizen science projects.

It was eBird that brought my attention back to listing. By going to "Your Profile" on eBird, I was able to discover that I first used eBird June 26, 2006. I was pretty certain that I didn't use eBird regularly at first. By scrolling through my reports in "Manage My Checklists," I figured out that I began using eBird for all of my reports in fall of 2011.

More recently, I have been adding historical reports dating back to September 5, 1985. That effort has been sporadic rather than systematic. eBird has made me aware of the importance of archiving that data in a location where it can be aggregated by researchers.

Dealing with the numerous gaps in my old records has made me aware of the importance of keeping detailed records.

Continued on page 5

Correction and apology

by Chuck Hundertmark

In "From the President" in the January 2018 issue of *The Lark Bunting*, Kris Haglund was inadvertently omitted from the list of individuals who provided complete and accurate records of DFO meetings in recent years. Haglund served as DFO secretary between the terms of Kay Niyo and Debbie James. My apologies to Kris, who not only served ably as secretary in 2016 and 2017, but who continues to serve as DFO's historian.

Ptarmigan Award recognizes Niyo impact

by Chuck Hundertmark

At the January 29, 2018 meeting of Denver Field Ornithologists, President Chuck Hundertmark presented the Ptarmigan Award to board member Kay Niyo in recognition of her contributions to the organization.

Niyo has played a major role in the growth of DFO since 2011. She first joined the board as secretary.

In that position, she implemented changes in the recording of board meeting minutes that greatly improved the ability of future board members to understand the decisions made by the board and the reasons for those decisions.

Niyo's experience with Evergreen Audubon and the Iowa Ornithological Society allowed her to introduce DFO to professionals who could provide needed services at prices consistent with DFO's budget.

When the board began looking for ways to improve the appearance and content of *The Lark Bunting*, Niyo introduced the board to newsletter designer Debbie Marshall, who provided a new format for the newsletter and monthly layout services at a competitive rate.

Niyo then assumed the duty of editor of *The Lark Bunting* in addition to continuing to serve as secretary. Under her editorship, the newsletter took on a more vibrant look with color photos by members and more varied content.

The board then turned to improving delivery of content through the web site. Niyo introduced us to Ann Johnson, who had designed several other web sites for birding and ornithological organizations. Johnson proved to be far more affordable than other bidders for the web design project and understood our needs completely.

Niyo was actively involved in development of the web site and worked closely with the Field Trip Committee members who were looking for ways to improve the process of signing up for DFO field trip offerings. The result was an online field trip listing, registration, and reporting system that may be the best among bird clubs in the country.

When the new web site was launched, Niyo assumed the role of lead administrator for the site. Working with other board members, she served as our interface with Johnson to deliver a steady stream of improvements to the web site.



Chuck Hundertmark presents the Ptarmigan award to Kay Niyo.

Field Trips

Continued from page 2

Prospect Park (Wheat Ridge Greenbelt) Saturday, March 10

9:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Jackie King (Email: jackie.king@ccd.edu Phone: 720-381-3314)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet just inside Prospect Park entrance in the lot right next to Prospect Lake.

This is a trip with easy walking and accessible for mobility impaired individuals. Good trip for novice birders and new members.

Cherry Creek SP Wetlands Loop (Arapahoe County) Sunday, March 11

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Karen von Saltza & Bill Wuerthele (Email: kvonsaltza@yahoo.com Phone: 303-941-4881)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet at the Prairie Loop lot in Cherry Creek SP. State Parks pass or day pass required.

NOTE: Daylight Savings Time starts today. This is a half day of walking that passes through most of the important habitats found in the park over a distance of about 3 miles. Trails could be slippery or muddy, so dress accordingly. Beginning birders are welcome.

Elbert County Monday, March 12

6:00 AM - 2:00 PM

David Suddjian (Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meet at Lowe's in Castle Rock, 1360 New Beale St, Castle Rock, CO 80108.

We'll explore some parts of

Continued on page 4

Continued on page 4

Field Trips

Continued from page 3

Elbert County, driving roads and seeing what we can find. We will likely focus on the southeastern part of the county, seeking longspurs and raptors and other prairie birds.

Littleton Area Eastern Screech-Owl

Tuesday, March 13
6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

David Suddjian (Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meeting location in Littleton area will be announced by leader at least two days before the trip.

We will visit some local parks in the evening to find Eastern Screech-Owls.

First Creek at Denver Open Space

Saturday, March 17
7:15 AM - 11:30 AM

Patrick O'Driscoll (Email: patodrisk@gmail.com
Phone: 303-885-6955 (cell))

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: From East Denver take 56th Ave east toward Pena Blvd. First Creek parking lot is just before Pena on your left (north).

We'll look for new arrivals in Denver's newest open space. Time and conditions permitting, we may bird BOTH sides of First Creek. Expect to walk 3-4 miles on paved and level trails.

NOTE: No restrooms at this location. "Go before you go" at King Soopers off Tower Road in Green Valley Ranch.

Continued on next page

MONTHLY MEETINGS, continued from page 1

eBird has become a major source of biodiversity data, increasing our knowledge of the dynamics of species distributions and having a direct impact on the conservation of birds and their habitats.

Participants have collectively spent more than 30 million hours collecting effort-based checklists, amassing more than 400 million records, representing every country in the world.

Birds capture the human spirit, our imagination, and our passion in a way that few other organisms do. They also serve as the most accessible and sensitive indicator of ecosystem health and environmental change. When combined, these two seemingly simple statements hint at the tremendous power that birds have to teach us. Never before have we had as great an opportunity to bring together different kinds of people from around the world to monitor and understand our natural world – simply by watching (and collecting information on birds.

Already, over 500,000 people around the world have taken part in reporting observations to eBird – from community members in the Yucatán Peninsula, to tour guides in Costa Rica, to researchers in India. This diversity in participation has given us an unprecedented look into bird migration, habitat use and distribution. Birds also have the power to inspire us to change behavior. Birds teach us that bird conservation isn't a simple matter of just protecting birds, or even protecting ecosystems.

Ultimately, conserving biodiversity, including birds and their ecosystems, is about protecting livelihoods and ensuring a sustainable future for us all.

Monday, March 19 7:00 pm

End of the World: Capturing Siberia's Wildlife on Video

Nathan Pieplow, Professor of Rhetoric

University of Colorado Boulder

In 2017, Nathan Pieplow and three other birders traveled to the ends of the earth — through Siberia from the Mongolian border to the Arctic Ocean — to make video and audio recordings of some of Earth's most remarkable creatures. In this tale of their adventure, Pieplow will take us along on their adventure by sharing video footage that illuminates the family lives of Great Gray and Snowy Owls, the survival tricks of the Arctic Fox, the courtship antics of the Ruff, and much more.

PTARMIGAN AWARD, continued from page 3

DFO also created a series of manuals on board and field trip functions. Niyo provided formatting direction to remove the stylistic inconsistencies that result from multiple authors of those documents. She gave the documents a polished, professional appearance and prepared them for posting on the web site.

More recently, as she began moving out of her multiple roles, she has worked with her successors to assure a smooth transition. "I can't imagine the progress we've made in DFO without Kay," Hundertmark said.

eBird Tip of the Month: *Customize profile*

Gregg Goodrich

Each eBird user can share a photo and a little personal birding information with other eBird users. You can customize your user profile by logging onto eBird.org and going to the “My eBird” tab. Click on the “Your Profile” link in the upper right hand of this screen.

If this is the first time you have gone to your profile, you will be asked to upload a photo, write a few words about your birding self, enter a personal website if you want, and select a default location for a graphical display of your birding data. Be certain to select the save button at the bottom of the screen.

You will be amazed at the wealth of birding information that can be rendered from your checklists.

Your name on your checklists will now be linked to your profile, so eBird users can learn a little bit about you and you can learn about them. Check out the top eBird users in Colorado by clicking on the “Explore Data” tab. Then select the “Top 100” link in the Your Totals box on the upper right.

In the upper right of the next screen, select “All Time” or the year for the Top 100. Each name that is highlighted in blue can be selected to access their profile. This is how you can learn about your fellow eBirders.

You can control what data you wish to share. From the “My eBird” tab on the first line just after your name, select “Preferences.” On this screen, you can restrict certain data from being seen by other eBird users. Remember to save at the bottom of the screen if you make changes.

Check out [Chris Wood's profile](#). He is the speaker at the February DFO meeting—a Colorado boy who is an eBird expert.

PRESIDENT, continued from page 2

One of the great things about eBird is it makes you an instant citizen scientist. Your reports immediately become available to researchers who are working to understand avian population dynamics. But as you can see from my experience, this tool also provides a wealth of ways to track your own birding history.

Another statistic in “My Profile” caught my attention. I’ve logged 183 species with photos. That’s a number upon which I’d like to improve. Photos can contain a lot of information and, along with recording of vocalizations, are becoming an important auxiliary to the skin collections that were the gold standard of field work well into the 20th century.

When used along with the smartphone app for data collection, eBird simplifies the record keeping process for you. It also becomes a motivator, kicking the competitive impulse into high gear. While striving to be the top eBirder in Boulder County may not be a lofty goal, if it gets me away from the computer and into the field, it can’t be all bad.

DFO members have a chance to learn more about eBird at the February 19, 2018, meeting—7 p.m. at Ricketson Auditorium, Denver Museum of Nature and Science.

Field Trips

Continued from page 4

Cañon City

Sunday, March 18

6:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Mark Amershek (Email: mamershek@msn.com
Phone: 303-329-8646)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 15

Directions: Meet at the Safe-way at 9229 East Lincoln Ave, Lone Tree, Co 80124.

Expect to see Scaled Quail, Canyon Wren, Rock Wren, Mountain Bluebirds. We can hope for Juniper Titmouse, and Pinyon Jay.

Colorado Eastern Prairie

Tuesday, March 20

4:30 AM - 6:00 PM

David Suddjian (Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet near Bennet off I-70 at the south side of the King Soopers parking lot.

This full day trip will explore eastern Colorado, possibly visiting Yuma, Kit Carson, Cheyenne, or Lincoln counties.

We can hope for longspurs, raptors, and hopefully eastern specialties and rare birds. Plan to carpool from the meeting spot.

South Platte River Reservoir and River Trail

Wednesday, March 21

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Edmund J Holub (Email: edmund.holub@gmail.com
Phone: 303-979-2194)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Meet at parking lot adjoining the South Platte Reservoir. See field trip listings

Continued on page 6

Field Trips

Continued from page 5

on DFO website for detailed directions.

After exploring the reservoir, we will walk along the South Platte River looking for shore-birds and ducks. The walk is 2-4 miles.

Rueter-Hess Reservoir (Douglas Co.)

Friday, March 23

7:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Mary Cay Burger (Email: mcburger3@juno.com
Phone: 720-940-8394)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Meet at Barr CCC Park, 18964 S Twenty Mile Rd, Parker, CO.

Tim Ryan from Parker Water Dept. will lead us on a 2-part field trip. We will bird around the pond and bike trail at Barr CCC Park. Then take the PWSD van to visit Rueter Hess Reservoir. Bring a scope, if you have one, for the lake.

Park County Explorations Monday, March 26

5:30 AM - 4:00 PM

David Suddjian (Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at SW corner of Safeway parking lot at NE corner of Yosemite and Lincoln Ave in Lone Tree about 1 mile west of I-25. Park away from store.

This trip will visit forests and open areas of the southern area of Park County. Returning sapsuckers and Pinyon Jay are possible and we will plan to visit the open waters of 11 Mile Reservoir to look for migrating ducks.

Continued on next page

January flight log

by David Suddjian

DFO's Big Year 2018 is up and flying, with **131** species recorded by the end of January. That is above the 85 species that is the average for the month of January in past years by a far measure.

We fielded 14 field trips in January. Two planned trips were cancelled. Highlights among the field trips were those reaching farther afield, such as Cañon City/Pueblo, Victor in Teller County, Bobcat Ridge in Larimer County, and a wide-ranging chase trip.

As a reminder, species on the Colorado list were coded to help our planning:

Code 1 – expected without special planning (193 species)

Code 2 – expected but some basic planning is needed (77 species)

Code 3 – specialties requiring trips to particular places at the right time (69 species)

Code 4 – rarities that we can't specifically plan to encounter (163 species)

By the end of our first month this is where we stand:

- Code 1 species - we have found 98 (51%)
- Code 2 species – we have found 18 (23%)
- Code 3 species - we enjoyed 9 (13%) including White-winged Scoter, Long-tailed Duck, Red-necked Grebe, Great Black-backed Gull, Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, Black Rosy-Finch, Brown-capped Rosy-Finch, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, and Rusty Blackbird.
- Code 4 species – we found 6 (4%) of the best prizes: Brant at Parker, **Yellow-billed Loon** at South Platte Park Reservoir, **Snowy Owl** at Pueblo Reservoir, **Red-breasted Sapsucker** at Colorado Springs, **Varied Thrush** at Colorado Springs, and Prairie Warbler at Pueblo Reservoir.

Those in **bold** are all first records for DFO field trips in DFO's 10 years of online records!



Big Year field trip to Mueller State Park and Victor on January 30, 2018. Mark Amershek

2018 Bird Festivals

by Mary Cay Burger and Sharon Tinianow

Now is the time to make plans to attend one (or more) of the birding festivals in Colorado and surrounding states. Here is a list to get you started with your planning.

March 2, 2018 - April 8, 2018

Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary Guided Sandhill Crane Viewing Experiences

**Iain Nicolson Audubon Center at Rose Sanctuary,
Gibbon, Nebraska**

Every March, over 600,000 Sandhill Cranes converge on the Platte River valley. For information on how to see them, visit [Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary Guided Sandhill Crane Viewing Experiences](#).

March 3, 2018 - April 2, 2018

2018 Crane Migration Tours

Wood River, NE

Experience the magic of half a million Sandhill Cranes coming in to roost in the evening on the Platte River or waking up to greet the sun each morning near Grand Island, Nebraska. Guided viewing blind tours at the largest crane roost in the world can be scheduled. Speaking events follow morning tours or precede evening tours each weekend. Visit the website at [Crane Migration Tours](#). Reservations can be made online or by phone after January 4th. For information, call 308-382-1820 or email info@cranetrust.org. Book now as these tours fill quickly.

March 9 - 11, 2018

34th Monte Vista Crane Festival

Monte Vista, Colorado

Every year, nearly 20,000 Sandhill Cranes descend on Colorado's scenic San Luis Valley before continuing their northward spring migration. Activities during the Monte Vista Crane Festival include interpreter-led bus tours to view the cranes as well as field trips to the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve, Penitente Canyon Recreation Area, and tours to view local raptors. For information, visit [34th Monte Vista Crane Festival](#) or contact Deb Callahan via email at mvcfpub@gmail.com.

March 22 - 25, 2018

Audubon's Nebraska Crane Festival

Kearney, NE

Enjoy crane migration, scientific and general talks, as well as vendors and guided general birding tours with Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary. For information, visit [Audubon's Nebraska Crane Festival](#), call 308-468-5282, or email nebraska@audubon.org.

Welcome to new DFO members: Richard Bieser, Denver; Brian Brooks, Castle Rock; David Chernack, Denver; Denise Curran, Westminster; Jean Davis, Denver; Kathy Duerr, Littleton; Gary Ellis, Highlands Ranch; Paula and Stan Gudder, Denver; Allen Adinoff and Mary Klinnert, Greenwood Village; Anna Edgren and Brad Kloewer, Denver; Shannon Koen, Denver; Roger Koester, Golden; Phil Lyon, Lakewood; Megan Miller, Aurora; Catherine Olin, Cañon City; Sue Riffe, Lyons; Lisa Roemer, Denver; Marjorie Roosevelt, Englewood; Steve Ryder, Wheat Ridge; Irvin Savidge, Arvada; Dennis Scherrer, Denver; Lynne Scholfield, Denver; Milton Shaw, Littleton; Frank and Barbara Shissler, Littleton; Laurel Starr, Golden; Karen Strong, Conifer; Tom Whitten, Denver

Field Trips

Continued from page 6

A state park pass or daily fee are required.

Chase Trip

Saturday, March 31

5:30 AM - 5:30 PM

Pratyaydipta Rudra & Sreemala Das Majumder (Email: pratyayr@gmail.com Phone: 919-699-4043)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at the Colorado Parks and Wildlife, 6060 N Broadway to carpool.

We will go to 2-3 different sites, which will be decided upon based on recent sightings, likely in Jefferson and Douglas counties. Expect to walk up to 5 miles and some elevation gain. Walkie talkies will be very helpful. We will carpool in 3 cars and drivers will be reimbursed for mileage.

Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat/Sawhill (Boulder County)

Saturday, March 31

6:30 AM - 11:00 AM

Chuck Hundertmark (Email: chundertmark8@gmail.com Phone: 303-604-0531)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at Cottonwood Marsh parking lot in Boulder County. See field trip listings on DFO website for detailed directions.

We'll walk 2-3 miles on level ground. We will head for Boulder Creek to listen for Eastern Screech-owl and Great Horned Owls.

We'll walk back through the lakes to look for waterfowl. Bring a scope if you have one. At 75th St and Boulder Creek, we should find Dippers.

Last Month's Program: *Brown-capped Rosy-Finches*

Tim Johnson

NOTE: A video of the January program can be seen on the [DFO website](#). Select Past Programs and click on the arrow icon to the right of the program title.

DFO's first program of 2018 featured Colorado's iconic and near-endemic Brown-capped Rosy-Finch (BCRF) and was given by Garth Spellman, Curator of Ornithology at Denver Museum of Nature and Science.

Dr. Spellman's major research interest is a central question in evolutionary biology: how changes in the environment faced by a species show up in that species' genes.

He described the organization and objectives of an ongoing study of BCRF involving many institutions, including DMNS, the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, and the University of California at Los Angeles and Santa Cruz.

The project aims to obtain enough genetic and behavioral information about this poorly-studied bird to inform conservation strategies and clarify its relationship to other members of the rosy finch complex.

The BCRF is North America's highest altitude breeding bird. It is close to endemic to Colorado, some breed in Wyoming and, at one time, they bred in New Mexico.

Nesting occurs on cliff faces, making nesting studies a dicey proposition.

During breeding season, they feed on wind-blown insects and seeds that accumulate on snowfields.

In winter they descend to lower elevations and flock with two other

North American species, the Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch and the Black Rosy-Finch.

In addition to detailing the distribution of BCRF, the project includes other specific objectives and questions to be answered.

One of these is population trends. The current estimate of the BCRF population is about 45,000 birds. One hundred years ago, this number could have been 1 million or more.

Studies on recruitment of BCRF, based on the fraction of 2nd-year birds in the total population, indicate that the species is rapidly losing ground.

This is confirmed by Christmas Bird Count data, which suggest that the birds are declining at a rate of 3.7% per year.

By contrast, the Black and Gray-crowned species recruitment ratios suggest stable populations at present. Why does the BCRF differ?

Climate change effects are also being studied. One important factor for BCRF survival is snowfields, which trap food during breeding season.

Snow and ice groundcover in their breeding range has decreased about 40% in the last half-century. Has this affected the birds' breeding success?

Movement patterns are also of interest. A key question for potential managers and geneticists is whether BCRF exists in Colorado as a mixed breeding population or a collection of isolated populations.

Limited data obtained from band

recapture studies suggest that the birds only move 30 miles or so between winter and summer ranges.

See Dr. Spellman's article in this issue for details.

Genetic analysis is being done, as well. DNA sequencing will be conducted on 60 birds. Although most of the birds are BCRF, representatives from the 4 Asian rosy finch species and the other two North American species are included.

These data will help answer a number of questions, such as how different are the three recognized North American species from one another?

How closely related are they to Asian species?

Is the BCRF the youngest, as range data suggest?

Do BCRF have any adaptive genes, for example, relating to temperature and altitude tolerance?

Do sequence data support a mixed breeding population or isolated populations?

Hopefully, genome sequencing will identify short sequences specific to defined geographic populations, so that a single feather could quickly and inexpensively identify where a bird came from.

Other objectives and future directions for the project include chemical and isotopic analysis of feather samples to assess food sources and stress levels, measurements of annual survival, effects of disease, and studies of competitors, like the American Pipit or, interestingly, introduced fish which could compete for insects.

Brown-capped Rosy-Finch data needed: You can help

by Garth Spellman, PhD

Calling all birders, color-banded Brown-capped Rosy-Finches coming your way.

Researchers at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies and the University of California Santa Cruz are trying to uncover the broad distributional movements of Brown-capped Rosy-Finches.

Field ornithologists can help by reporting banded bird sightings on eBird or CitSci.org.

Finches are being banded in the Winter (nonbreeding season) and Summer (breeding season) and the goal is to reveal how tightly Winter and Summer distributions are connected.

If a bird is banded during the Summer (June 15th-August 15th), the bird will be banded with a color band on its right leg.

If a bird is banded during the winter, the bird will be banded with a color band on its left leg.

The colors correspond to broad areas across the Rosy-Finch distribution throughout Colorado and Southern Wyoming. See the adjacent map for details.

A gold band indicates the bird was captured and banded in the northern Front Range, a green band indicates the bird was banded in Evergreen, CO, and a blue band indicates the bird was originally banded near Telluride, CO.

More colors will follow as

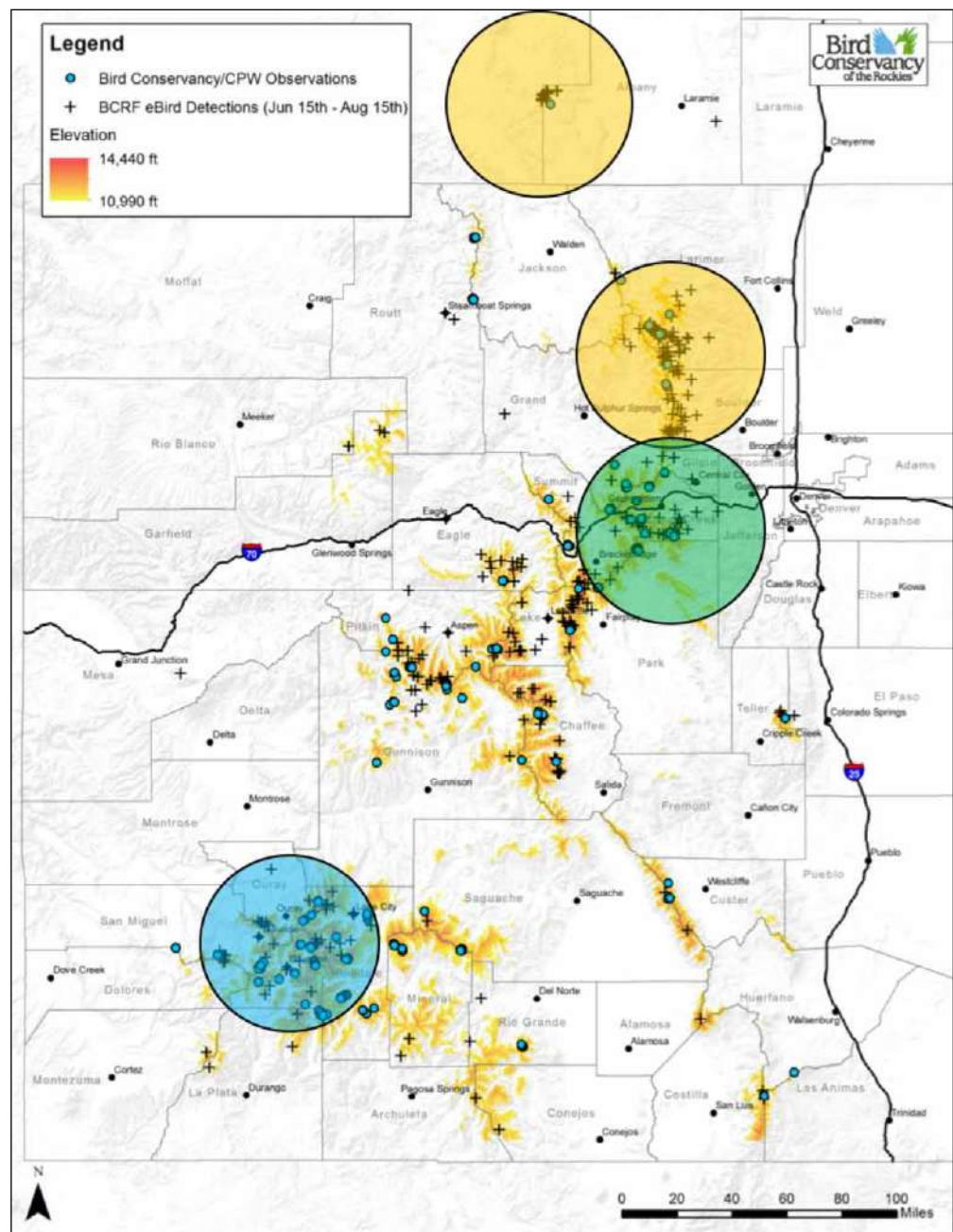
we expand banding operations, but this will not occur in the beginning of 2018.

If you sight a color banded Brown-capped Rosy-Finch, please record the following information and report your sighting.

- Date/Time
- 15 June-15 August most valuable at this time (Most birds have thus far been banded in the Winter so sum-

mer sightings are crucial. However, all resightings are important.)

- Location
 - Latitude/Longitude
 - A picture or description of the bird
 - Colorband (blue, gold, green)
 - Leg (bird's right or left)
 - Number of birds observed
 - **Submit on eBird or CitSci.org.**
- Thank you for your help!



2017 Denver Christmas Bird Count highlights

by *Joey Kellner, Compiler*

The 2017 Denver Christmas Bird Count (CBC) took place on December 16th.

This is the 64th consecutive year that the Denver Field Ornithologists has conducted a Christmas Count within the same 15-mile diameter count circle established in 1954 and centered just north of the old Ken Caryl Ranch entrance.

The weather on count day started out mostly cloudy and relatively calm. Morning temperatures started at 20F, but thankfully, no wind to light wind.

It was a nice day to be out with the team reporting a respectable 37,776 individual birds of 108 species recorded by 169 field observers and 14 feeder watchers.

Unfortunately, one Count Area was not able to be covered due to sudden illness.

No new species were added to the cumulative Denver CBC list. The grand total of species seen since 1954 thus remains at 201.

Rare birds, defined as having been seen on less than 10% of the previous counts, found this year included:

- Spotted Sandpiper at Chatfield Reservoir—only the 2nd time recorded on the Denver CBC and found in Area 8,
- Gray Catbird at Chatfield Farms—only the 6th time recorded on the Denver CBC and found in Area 10 (Lower Deer Creek).

Uncommon birds, defined as having been seen on 10–24% of the previous counts, found this year included:

- Pacific Loon - 7th time recorded on the Count,
- Northern Saw-whet Owl - 8th time recorded on the count,



Bushtit. *Jim Esten*

- Golden-crowned Sparrow - amazingly the 13th time recorded on the count, found and photographed by a feeder watcher on Count Day near the town of Morrison,
- Eurasian Collared-Dove – at multiple areas, a recent explosive addition to the annual count,
- Ross's Goose – 13th time recorded,
- Cackling Goose – at multiple areas, split from Canada Goose and tracked starting in 2004,
- Lesser Goldfinch – 13th time recorded,
- Barrow's Goldeneye – 14th time recorded,
- Rock Wren - 15th time recorded,
- Pine Grosbeak – 16th time recorded on the Count.

Record-high individual numbers were established for several species this year: Cackling Goose (6,367), Common Loon (7), Great Horned Owl (43), Common Raven (188), Bushtit (194), and White-breasted Nuthatch (214).

These ten species accounted for 62.7% of the birds counted:

- Canada Goose (9,850)
- Cackling Goose (6,367)
- Mallard (1,258)

- House Finch (1,070)
- American Crow (1,046)
- European Starling (965)
- Red-winged Blackbird (958)
- Northern Shoveler (750)
- Black-billed Magpie (731)
- Black-capped Chickadee (714).

Christmas Bird Counts must be performed on a single calendar day. Any species seen outside that date can be added as “Count Week” if the sighting falls within three days prior or after the count date.

One additional “Count Week” species was noted in the three days prior to count day in 2017: Several Rusty Blackbirds were found along the shore of Chatfield Reservoir near the Plum Creek delta.

That makes the overall count for this year an amazing **109 species**.

As compiler of the 64th Denver Christmas Bird Count, I thank all of the field observers and feeder watchers for participating.

Special thanks go to the Area Leaders whose efforts and knowledge make this count a success and to Cheryl Teuton and Dan Brooke, who did an amazing job once again of coordinating this year's potluck.

Thank you, Bob Shade, for contacting, coordinating, and compiling all the Feeder Watcher data.

Thanks also to Colorado Parks and Wildlife for the use of the Chatfield State Park Multi-Purpose Room for our compilation meeting.

Lastly, thanks to all who brought drinks and food to share! Sharing food and friendship after a day in the field was a great way to relax before the holidays.

I hope to see you all at the compilation next year.

Denver Field Ornithologists

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President	Chuck Hundertmark	chundertmark8@gmail.com
Vice President		
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Secretary	Debbie James	paradox002@aol.com
Membership Chair	Mary Cay Burger	mcburger3@juno.com
Past President	Joe Roller	jroller9@gmail.com

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Kristine Haglund	303-906-8044	kahaglund1@aol.com
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FIELD TRIP SCHEDULERS

January	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
February	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
March	Bill Wuerthele	303-333-2519
April	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
May	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
June	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
July	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
August	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
September	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
October	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
November	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
December	Jill Boice	303-863-7580

DFO logo by Radeaux

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The Lark Bunting Photo Editor	Jim Esten	jcesten@gmail.com
The Lark Bunting Designer	Debbie Marshall, Marshall Publishing	marshallpublish@gmail.com

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COBirds	Internet bird-sighting discussion list	cobirds@googlegroups.com
DMNS Liaison	Jeff Stephenson	jstephenson@dmns.org
Tuesday Birders	Mary Keithler	mkeithler@yahoo.com
	Backup contact, Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net

DFO MEETING LOCATION

Meetings are held each month except May, June, July, and December at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science and are open to the public. Exact dates, speaker information, and cancellations will be posted on the DFO website (<http://dfobirds.org>).

The Lark Bunting

DFO publishes *The Lark Bunting* monthly. Readers are encouraged to submit original articles, book reviews, or photos for publication. Please submit articles by the 1st of the month to Sharon Tinianow, editor, at sharontinianow@gmail.com. Please submit photos of birds or of bird outings as image files to Jim Esten, photo editor, at jcesten@gmail.com. Credit will be given to authors and photographers. The editors reserve the right to select suitable articles and photos for publication and to edit any selected materials. © 2017 Denver Field Ornithologists. All Rights Reserved.

Thank you for your contribution to our Research, Education, and Conservation Grant Fund: Kathy and Phill Bird, Tom Reilly and Frances Campbell, Colin Deihl and Dina Clark, Kevin Corwin, Denise Curran, Patricia Flood, John and Peggy Gonder, Jan and Doug Hodous, Cynthia Madsen, Mary Fran O'Connor, Richard and Cheri Phillips, Lisa Roemer, Marjorie Roosevelt, Laurel Starr, Jeff Stephenson, Bob and Nancy Stocker, Diane Wagner, Tom Whitten

Upcoming Speakers

The Denver Field Ornithologists monthly meetings are held in Ricketson Auditorium at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science in City Park.

These meetings are free and open to the public and occur from 7 to 8:30 p.m. on Mondays of each month August through April (except December).

Check below for the dates. Park on the north side of the Museum and enter in the north side security/employee entrance and tell the guard that you are there for the DFO meeting.

Occasionally, a meeting may be moved to a different location in the museum. These changes are announced in *The Lark Bunting* and posted on this website.

Chris Wood Feb. 19
eBird and the Elephant's Child

Nathan Pieplow Mar. 19
End of the World: Siberian Wildlife

Francis Commercon Apr. 16
Bird Conservation in China

Denver Field Ornithologists Membership Application

Join online at <http://dfobirds.org>, or by mail.

DFO memberships expire Dec. 31; valid for the next year if paid after Oct. 1.

DFO provides grants to individuals or organizations whose mission includes ornithological research, education, and conservation.

DFO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

- | | |
|---|----------|
| ☐ Annual family membership (electronic <i>The Lark Bunting</i>) | \$ 25 |
| ☐ Annual family membership (mailed <i>The Lark Bunting</i>) | \$ 40 |
| ☐ Student membership (age ≤ 26) | \$ 10 |
| ☐ Research, Education, & Conservation Grant Fund donation | \$ _____ |

Total \$ _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____

Email (legible) _____

(Must include for electronic *The Lark Bunting*)

Check payable to DFO and send to Sue Summers, 2364 W Costilla Ave, Littleton, CO 80120-3502

The Lark Bunting

Denver Field Ornithologists
10826 E. Maplewood Place
Englewood, CO 80111-5742

Featured This Month

Kay Niyo Honored

January Flight Log

The iconic BCRF



The Lark Bunting

DENVER FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS/APRIL 2018/VOL 54 NO 4

[HTTP://DFOBIRDS.ORG](http://DFOBIRDS.ORG)

Field Trips

Register for DFO field trips on the website or contact the leader directly. Bring your own binoculars, water, snacks or lunch, and sunscreen. Dress for the weather. More detailed directions and descriptions of each trip can be found on the website. **Please be considerate and delete your reservation if you are unable to attend a trip for which you have registered.**

NOTE: DFO Big Year 2018 Rules and Regulations can be found on the website.

Ken Caryl Valley Area Tuesday, April 3 7:30 AM - 1:00 PM

David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 8
Directions: Meet at the northern parking lot for South Valley Park along South Valley Road.

We will carpool from the parking lot and visit a few areas in search of a variety of birds at private Ken Caryl Ranch. Plan for up to 3-5 miles of walking on mostly easy terrain. If there is a rarity in the local area, we may chase it.

Front Range Owling Wednesday, April 4 6:00 PM - 9:30 PM

David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659

Continued on page 2

Monthly meetings: March, April

DFO monthly programs take place at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, Ricketson Auditorium, beginning at 7 PM. Enter through the north side security/employee entrance and tell the guard you are here for the DFO meeting.

Monday, March 19, 7:00 pm

End of the World: Capturing Siberia's Birdlife on Video

Nathan Pieplow, Associate Director of Global Studies RAP, CU Boulder



Nathan Pieplow
Photo credit: Molly Steele

Nathan Pieplow returns to DFO to share another aspect of his work with birds. In 2017, Pieplow and three other birders traveled to the ends of the earth — through Siberia from the Mongolian border to the Arctic Ocean — to make video and audio recordings of some of Earth's most remarkable creatures. In this tale of their adventure, Pieplow shares video footage that illuminates the family lives of Great Gray and Snowy Owls, the survival tricks of the Arctic Fox, the courtship antics of the Ruff, and much more.

Pieplow is the author of *Field Guide to Bird Sounds of Eastern North America* (published in 2017 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, New York). Pieplow is a regular presenter at DFO meetings. He is the founder of www.Earbirding.com and is one of the authors of the Colorado Birding Trail. He teaches writing and rhetoric at the University of Colorado Boulder.

Monday, April 16, 7:00 pm

Bird Conservation in China

Francis Commercon

Francis Commercon is a senior at Colorado State University studying Fish, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology and Biological Science. He has been passionate about birds and the Mandarin language since elementary school. Commercon combined these passions to study bird conservation in southern Yunnan province, China, for an honors thesis in 2017. His presentation will explore appreciation of birds from his perspective as a suburban American youth and from the perspective of individuals in a rural village in southern China.

Field Trips

Continued from page 1

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meeting location will be announced by the leader at least two days before the trip.

Our owling locations will likely be in Jefferson or Douglas counties. We will focus on the Northern Pygmy-Owl and Northern Saw-whet Owl. As always with owling, no guarantees, but we will try. Plan for standing in the cold and short walks in the dark.

Fountain Creek Regional Park (El Paso County)

Thursday, April 5

6:00 AM - 2:30 PM

Karen von Saltza

Email: kvonsaltza@yahoo.com

Phone: 303-941-4881

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 7

Directions: Meet at the Safeway, 9229 East Lincoln Ave., Lone Tree CO 80124. Park away from the store.

This trip will actually be led by Diane Roberts, our most recent trip leader to be certified. The habitat at Fountain Creek is excellent for spring songbirds and migrants. The drive is about one hour and we will walk about 4 miles on an even path. Dress in layers.

Denver City Park (Denver County)

Saturday, April 7

7:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Patrick O'Driscoll

Email: patodrisk@gmail.com

Phone: 303-885-6955

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 12

Continued on page 3

New vice president joins board



From the President Chuck Hundertmark

At its Feb. 25 meeting, the DFO board unanimously elected Dave Hill to serve as vice president. Dave fills a long-vacant position and will serve through April 2018, when the membership will vote on his nomination to serve a full year.

Many of you already know Dave. He is an active DFO field trip leader and a regular attendee at DFO's monthly meetings. A native of Illinois, he is a Southern Illinois University graduate. He taught chemistry and computer education in the Aurora Public Schools before he retired.

Along with his engagement with DFO, Dave is also a long-time member of Audubon Society of Greater Denver (ASGD). He took ASGD's Beginning Bird Class before moving on to the Master Birder class. After completing the class, he moved on to help direct the program. He served on ASGD's board and assisted at the Pawnee Grasslands Institute.

With the election of Dave to the vice president position, DFO has taken an important step toward establishing a sound process of leadership succession. The process began with the establishment of the DFO Nominating Committee as a standing committee. Under Susan Blansett's leadership, that committee has been reaching out to members to find the right match for the positions needed to nurture our club's high-caliber programs that support the interests of our members.

Another important step in building a leadership succession process was to separate the roles of vice president and program chair. With that step, the vice presidency became a clear preparation for moving into the role of president. A year serving as vice president will ensure that candidates for DFO president have time to learn DFO's practices, strengths and challenges.

I'm looking forward to working with Dave during the next year. In our conversations leading up to his nomination, he showed a clear understanding of the leadership role and an enthusiasm for becoming more engaged with DFO.

February flight log

By David Suddjian

DFO's Big Year 2018 added 11 new species in February, bringing the total to 142 species. That is 39 species more than the average number seen by this time of year for the prior five years. We fielded 11 field trips in February. Weather was more of a factor and five planned trips were canceled or postponed. Field trips ranging further afield included an overnight to Otero County, two trips to the northeast, and three to Larimer County.



Species on the Colorado list were coded to help our planning:

Code 1: Expected without special planning
(193 species total from the state list)

Code 2: Expected but some basic planning is needed
(77 species total)

Code 3: Specialties requiring trips to particular places at the right time
(69 species total)

Code 4: Rarities that we can't specifically plan to encounter
(163 species total)

As of the end of February, we found 100 (52%) of the Code 1 species, 23 (30%) of the Code 2 species, 11 (16%) of the Code 3 species, and 8 (5%) of the Code 4 species. The new Code 3 species added in February were a Short-eared Owl near La Junta and an Eastern Screech Owl at Fort Collins. The new Code 4 species were an American Woodcock and a Bohemian Waxwing, both at Bobcat Ridge in Larimer County. This is just the second time these two species have been found by any DFO field trip in the past ten years. A Fox Sparrow seen in Larimer County deserves mention. Although it is "only" a Code 2 species, this was only the third time in the last ten years when a Fox Sparrow was found on a DFO field trip.



Tundra and Trumpeter Swans, Southwest Metro Field Trip
Photo credit: Jim Esten

Field Trips

Continued from page 2

Directions: Meet at parking strip on north side of Ferril Lake.

We'll observe and count the first herons and egrets for the DFO Colonial Waterbirds project, but there'll be more to see across the park. Early migrants, raptors, songbirds, maybe even a sapsucker. Dress for the weather.

Southwest Metro Area Ponds and Lakes Monday, April 9

7:00 AM - 1:00 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at parking lot for Harriman Lake Park off South Kipling Street.

We will visit several parks with lakes and ponds for a variety of ducks, shorebirds, and other waterbirds. If a rarity is in the local region, we may pursue it. Itinerary decided day of the trip. Scopes will be helpful.

Colorado Eastern Prairie Tuesday, April 10

5:00 AM - 6:00 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet near Bennet off I-70 at the south side of the King Sooper's parking lot.

On this full day trip we will explore out to the eastern border of Colorado, visiting Yuma, Kit Carson, Cheyenne,

Continued on page 4

Field Trips

Continued from page 3

and/or Lincoln counties. We will seek migrants, eastern specialties, and rare birds. Plan to carpool from the meeting spot.

Wetland Wonders of Weld County Thursday, April 12 7:00 AM - 3:30 PM

Joe Roller & Gregg Goodrich
Email: jroller9@gmail.com
Phone: 303-204-0828

Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at the Colorado Parks and Wildlife, 6060 N. Broadway to carpool.

We'll check some of the wetland gems of Weld County, including Stewart's Pond, the Behrens Reservoir area, Beebe Draw, Lower Latham, and hotspots east of there. Expect migrant shorebirds, a variety of waterfowl and early migrants. Easy trip, mostly scoping near the vehicles.

Cameron Pass for Boreal Owls Sat, April 14 - Sun, April 15 2:00 PM - 1:00 AM

Francis Commercon
and Paul Slingsby
Email: siskinbyderailleur@gmail.com
Phone: 303-470-9130

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous
Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the Walmart, 4500 Weitzel Street, Timnath, CO 80547. We will meet at the SE corner, right at the main entrance to the parking lot.

We will start at Moose Visitor Center for mountain specialties, then hike up to Cameron Pass

Continued on page 5

Election of officers and directors

By Susan Blansett, Nominating Committee Chair

At its April 16, 2018 annual business meeting, DFO will elect a full slate of officers for the next year and three directors for three-year terms. As set out in the bylaws, the election will be by majority of the voting members present in person at the annual meeting. The voting will be by voice vote.

The nominated officers and directors are:

Officers (one-year term)

Chuck Hundertmark	President
Dave Hill	Vice President
Debbie James	Secretary
Sue Summers	Treasurer
Mary Cay Burger	Membership Chair

Board of Directors (three-year term)

Will Burt	Website & Email Admin.
Karen Drozda	Knowledge & Learning
Patrick O'Driscoll	Media Relations

Directors Candice Johnson and Kay Niyo will be leaving the board in April. The board is grateful to Kay and Candice for their many years of superlative service to the DFO.

Welcome to new DFO members

Emily Braker, Longmont; Lauren Bynum, Colorado Springs; Kara Clark, Denver; James Cole, Littleton; Joe and Flavia Hoefler, Denver; Christina Leslie, Littleton; Debbie McCulliss, Greenwood Village; Robin McDougal, Denver; Lorraine Niemela, Golden; Orien Richmond, Denver; Jennifer and Jonathan Schneider, Denver.

Review of February program

By Tim Johnson

On Feb. 19, about 70 people braved the snow to hear a discussion of eBird by Chris Wood, Assistant Director of Information Science at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and lead eBird scientist. His presentation, “eBird and the Elephant’s Child,” took its name from a Rudyard Kipling story about an elephant that was punished for being intensely curious but got revenge in the end! His talk was a fascinating exploration of how everyday curiosity, if appropriately documented and treated with the right statistical tools, can lead to important science and public policy.

Wood began by giving eBird a larger context. He sees its methodology as a tool for understanding natural systems. He believes eBird’s base of citizen observers, with its potential for generating large amounts of data, may be the best available resource for environmental research and conservation. eBird statistics support this view. Wood noted that birders have submitted lists from about 6 million locations and from every country, representing 35 million person-hours in the field.

Wood emphasized that birds are uniquely qualified to be subjects for citizen science: they are ubiquitous and easily detectable; they are indicators of broader ecosystem composition, wherever one might be; and they are also indicators of environmental health. Best of all, people like to engage with them. It might be unproductive, for example, to invest effort in an eFly citizen science initiative.

The great challenge of Wood’s citizen science vision is data quality. Mere humans often don’t document observations rigorously. Wood cited eBird data for Yellow-Headed Blackbirds as an example, showing that the areas where they are most common are also areas with the least photographic evidence. The goal of eBird is to come up with a fine-grained distribution of bird species in space and time, so that one could predict what a seasoned birder would likely find at a given location, season, time of specific day, duration of effort, weather condition and so forth. Wood grouped the obstacles and paths to obtaining such high-quality data from checklists into three categories:

1. Misidentification – eBird has more than 1,800 checklist reviewers. All submitted lists are reviewed and potential flaws are identified by reference to seasonal abundance charts.

2. Individual observer variability – many of us have looked at eBird checklists and asked, “How did I miss all that stuff?” From one birder’s multiple checklists at one location, eBird can generate a “species accumulation curve,” a graph of the number of species seen versus hours of observation. This allows eBird to tell experienced observers from amateur ones. An experienced observer will identify more species in a given time than an amateur under the same conditions, especially if times are short.

Continued on page 6

Field Trips

Continued from page 4

and listen for Boreal Owls. Expect 5 miles of hiking and up to 500 feet of elevation gain after dark. Snowshoes are required. A thermos of warm drink, hand warmers, and a headlight are highly recommended.

Cherry Creek SP Wetlands Loop (Arapahoe County)

Sunday, April 15

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Karen von Saltza
and Bill Wuerthele
Email: kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Phone: 303-941-4881

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet at the Prairie Loop lot in Cherry Creek SP. State Parks pass or day pass required.

This is a half day of walking that passes through most of the important habitats found in the park over a distance of about 3.5 miles. Trails could be slippery or muddy. Beginning birders are welcome.

Genesee Park (Denver Mountain Parks)

Sunday, April 15

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Wendy Wibbens
Email: wibbwj@aol.com
Phone: 303-330-1175)

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous
Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Driving west, take exit 254 off of I-70 and cross to the south side of I-70. Turn right on Genesee Mountain Road. Drive 1.6 miles to the large, 100-car, gravel group-picnic parking lot. NOTE: Go right at the Road Closed sign at Mile 1.5.

Continued on page 6

Field Trips

Continued from page 5

Expect to see bluebirds, vireos, flycatchers, Western Wood-Pewee, Western Tanager, and Williamson's Sapsucker. We will walk at a leisurely pace on unpaved trails with some steep hills. We may go off trail. Elevation gain is from 7,500 feet of elevation to about 8,200 feet.

Southeastern Colorado Tues, April 17 - Wed, April 18 7:30 AM - 4:00 PM

David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Strenuous
Maximum Participants: 8
Directions: Meet at the RTD
Lincoln Station Park and Ride,
4681 Station Way,
Lone Tree CO 80124.

This is a 2-day trip focusing on shorebirds and waterbirds, with some spots that attract migrant landbirds. We will visit locations in Otero, Bent, Kiowa, Prowers, and Baca counties. Overnight at Lamar on 4/17. Participants are responsible for carpool arrangements in advance and all lodging.

McCabe Meadows Trailhead Saturday, April 21 7:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Wendy Wibbens & Sue Summers
Email: wibbwj@aol.com
Phone: 303-330-1175
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 10
Directions: From Parker Road and Main St, go south on Parker Road 1.3 miles to Indian Pipe Lane. Turn right and make an immediate right into the parking lot for McCabe Meadows.
We will hike along the Cherry

Continued on page 7

REVIEW, continued from page 5

3. Sparse and clumpy data – There is no substitute for large numbers of checklists evenly and densely distributed in space and time across a region, but that does not happen in many places. Wood showed that it is possible to build approximate population density distributions from sparse checklist data by using statistical procedures called STEM (spatio-temporal exploratory modeling). This information can be combined with remote sensing satellite imagery from NASA to identify what habitats bird populations need as they travel through their yearly cycle.

What good is all this? Your checklists can help determine what percentage of your birds live on public lands, whether they are concentrated in local areas at some times of year, where major and minor migration corridors are, and so forth. eBird cooperates with the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to identify public land areas of special conservation importance. For example, in California, in a collaboration with The Nature Conservancy, eBird STEM models identified specific agricultural fields that could be important food sources for migrating shorebirds at certain times. Farmers were paid to flood the fields, which birds indeed used heavily. [An article summarizing this can be found on the eBird website.](#)

To conclude, Wood offered guidelines for eBirders:

1. Report everything the checklist asks for.
2. Stationary counts are best.
3. Use Tracks on eBird mobile if you can.
4. Share checklists with companions.
5. Document rare species and high counts.
6. Be nice to the reviewers, even if your Ruddy Turnstone at Barr Lake didn't make the cut!

The Third Annual DFO Picnic is Right Around the Corner!

By Tom Behnfield

Plans are currently under way for the 3rd Annual DFO "Members Only" Picnic, which will be held in June. The exact date and the location have not been determined yet, but it will be on a Saturday. We hope that you will join 100 or more of your best birding buddies at this signature DFO event.

One of the most fun parts of the Picnic is the planning, so if you would like to help with the planning, please email your returning Picnic Coordinator Tom Behnfield at behnfield@q.com. The DFO Picnic – Bringing Birders and Bratwurst Together Since 2016.

Colonial Waterbirds Project: the birds are back and so are we



Black-crowned night-heron chicks clamor for food from parent (Ferril Lake, City Park, June 8, 2017). *Photo credit: Pat O'Driscoll*

By Pat O'Driscoll

This time last year, DFO jumped into a new citizen science project as several species of large wading and diving waterbirds returned to Front Range nesting colonies. To help learn more about these communities of cormorants, herons, and egrets in our midst, we asked DFO members to count and observe them whenever they birded in four metro Denver parks and to share their eBird lists with us afterward.

Thus was hatched the pilot year of the DFO Colonial Waterbirds Project.

Now the big waterbirds – Double-crested Cormorants, Great Blue Herons, Snowy Egrets and Black-crowned Night-Herons - are returning to nest again. As we ask you to help us track them this year in new and better ways, we are still analyzing the data we gathered from February to December 2017. But we can report some of our first-year findings.

- Number of lists/observations: DFO members filed 116 eBird lists, which amounted to 241 separate reports of those four species. Six lists also reported 1-3 Cattle Egrets in Denver City Park, but those birds stayed less than a month and did not nest. Forty percent of those reports were Double-crested Cormorant (DCCO) observations, the most numerous of the species, with 22 percent for Black-crowned Night-Herons (BCNH), 20 percent for Snowy Egrets (SNEG) and 17 percent for Great Blue Herons (GRBH).
- Most observed sites: Denver City Park (DCCO, BCNH and SNEG at Ferril and Duck lakes), had 59 eBird lists, three times the next closest. Lakewood's Belmar Park (GRBH and DCCO at Kountze Lake) had 18, Wheat Ridge Greenbelt (DCCO and GRBH at Tabor Lake) had 14 and

Continued on page 8

Field Trips

Continued from page 6

Creek trail for 3-4 miles. Habitat includes ponds, creek, willow, fields, and riparian areas.

First Creek at RM Arsenal Sunday, April 22

6:30 AM - 11:00 AM

Patrick O'Driscoll

Email: patodrisk@gmail.com

Phone: 303-885-6955

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the First Creek Open Space parking lot off 56th Avenue.

We may see Swainson's hawks and other raptors. We'll check for waterfowl, songbirds, woodpeckers, grackles, jays, herons, and egrets. Expect to walk 3-4 miles on level ground. Please note: No restrooms at this location, so "go before you go" at the King Soopers off nearby Tower Road.

Aurora Reservoir and Cherry Creek State Park

Monday, April 23

6:00 AM - 1:00 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at the Aurora Reservoir entrance road (S. Powhatan Road) at E. Quincy Avenue, about 1.5 miles east of E470.

This trip will focus on shorebirds and other waterbirds, with possible loons, scoters, and interesting gulls. Bring a scope if you have one.

Continued on page 8

Field Trips

Continued from page 7

Park County Reservoirs

Tuesday, April 24

5:30 AM - 3:00 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at RTD Park-n-Ride at C-470 and University Blvd. The group will meet in the southeast corner of the lot.

We'll visit Lake George, Eleven Mile Reservoir, and Antero Reservoir. We'll hope for possible loons, scoters, Red-necked Grebe, maybe large numbers of diving ducks and more. Probably limited walking. Bring a scope if you have one.

Cortez

Fri, April 27 - Sat, April 28

1:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Gregg Goodrich

Email: GreggGoodrich@gmail.com

Phone: 303-655-9135

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the McDonald's, 201 E. 6th Avenue, Durango, CO.

This multiday trip to Southwest Colorado will focus west of Cortez for Lucy's Warbler, Acorn Woodpecker, Gray Flycatcher, Black-throated Sparrow, and Gray Vireo. Considerable driving and hiking are involved. We will spend two nights in Cortez at the Hampton Inn, 2244 E. Hawkins St. (970-564-5924). Make a reservation for April 27 and 28, and mention you are with Denver Field Ornithologists to get the \$90 rate. Contact leader and check online listing for more details.

Continued on page 9

WATERBIRDS, continued from page 7

Denver's Washington Park (DCCO, SNEG and BCNH at Grasmere Lake) had 13. DFO birders with access to Parker Water Department waters (GBHE and DCCO) also filed 12 eBird lists.

- **Earliest/latest:** The first bird of 2017, a single adult cormorant in breeding plumage, was found swimming in City Park's Ferril Lake on Feb. 4. The last was an immature DCCO (likely hatched in the park in early summer) that lingered on the same lake until at least Dec. 23. For at least 2-1/2 months prior (Oct. 7), the bird appeared to nurse a damaged wing that seemed to confine it to the lake. But on Dec. 23, the cormorant took its first known flight in weeks, circling twice a few feet above the water's surface. One week later, the bird was gone.
- **Other first / last sightings:** Great Blue Herons were first seen at a nesting site on Feb. 21 (Belmar Park), Black-crowned Night-Herons on Mar. 22 (Washington Park) and Snowy Egrets on Apr. 9 (Washington Park). GBHE were last seen on Jul. 27 (Belmar Park and Parker Water), BCNH on Aug. 27 (City Park), and SNEG on Sep. 9 (City Park).
- **Peak 2017 counts:** 752 DCCO (City Park, Jun. 9); 163 BCNH (City Park, May 11); 68 GBHE (Parker Water, Jun. 15), and 66 SNEG (City Park, Jul. 23).

With minimal instructions, DFO birders came through with excellent data, particularly Rob Raker's succinct, uniform observations at Belmar Park. By using eBird as our "virtual clipboard," we got the project into the field quickly and efficiently. But using eBird as a platform to filter a few species out of longer bird lists presents data analysis challenges that we are still working through.

For that reason, the DFO Colonial Waterbirds Project plans to partner in 2018 with Bird Conservancy of the Rockies' ColonyWatch, which tracks communal nesting sites along the Front Range and beyond. Plans for a new data-gathering form and DFO volunteer sign-ups are in the works, with directions expected by April.

Until then, we invite DFO members who shared lists via eBird last year to continue doing so until you hear from us with the revised program. Last year's directions are on the DFO website in the drop-down menu under "Field Trips" at the top of the DFO home page.

This year, we will ask DFO participants to volunteer for regular visits to our four main observation parks – 1-2 visits if possible to a site each month through summer, and more if you are able. Come join us! For more information or to sign up, contact project coordinator Patrick O'Driscoll at patodrisk@gmail.com or 303-885-6955.

eBird Tip of the Month

By Gregg Goodrich

In spite of snowy weather, a good crowd showed for our DFO meeting featuring former DFO member and Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Chris Wood. He gave some wonderful insights into eBird. (See the article by Tim Johnson for a full description.)

I loved the interactive bird species migration maps he showed us. You can enjoy this great eBird feature by going to the ["Science" tab at eBird.org](#). Under the Science menu go to the third section titled ["eBird Modeling."](#) From this screen, scroll down to the bird you are interested in and click on the "Learn More" button under that bird. You will now see a map with a video play button in the middle of the map. As you play the video, you will see dates roll in the lower left of the screen. The lighter sections of the map indicate higher concentrations of the bird. It is a mesmerizing sight to see the annual flight of bird species.

My second takeaway from Wood's presentation was the importance of doing a "complete checklist" in eBird. A complete checklist is a list of ALL species seen and heard over a continuous period of time. So, the next time you see that cool bird, start a list that includes it as well as all other birds you can see or hear. This lets eBird know what is not there as well as what is there. Now a complete picture is made of that time and place. The eBird mobile app is a great way to record your sightings because it automatically tracks your time and distance.



Common Goldeneye are returning to area lakes and ponds.

Photo credit: Jim Esten

Field Trips

Continued from page 8

Poudre River and Poudre Canyon Saturday, April 28 6:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Chris Goulart

Email: cgoulart001@comcast.net

Phone: 586-764-2126)

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 7

Directions: Meet at the CPW parking lot, 6060 Broadway to carpool.

We will visit the Firestone Gravel Quarry to look for waterbirds, then go to Fort Collins to visit the CSU Environmental Learning Center, Prospect Ponds, and the Poudre Canyon up to Cameron Pass. We should see a wide variety of plains birds, riparian birds, water birds, and mountain birds on this trip.

Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat/Sawhill (Boulder County) Saturday, April 28

7:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Chuck Hundertmark

Email: chundertmark8@gmail.com

Phone: 303-604-0531)

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet at the Cottonwood Marsh parking lot.

We'll walk 1-3 miles on level ground. We will look at waterfowl and migrating shorebirds at the lakes at Walden and Sawhill Open Space areas. Bring a scope if you have one. At 75th St and Boulder Creek, we may find Black and Eastern Phoebe and dippers.

Continued on page 10

Field Trips

Continued from page 9

Chico Basin Ranch

Sunday, April 29

6:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Mark Amershek

Email: mamershek@msn.com

Phone: 303-329-8646

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 15

Directions: Will meet up at the King Soopers parking lot, 5544 Promenade Parkway, Castle Rock, CO 80108.

This is an all-day trip at a fee area. Volunteers with high clearance vehicles are needed (contact leader if you can provide). Driving distance from Castle Rock is about 100 miles, a little over two hours. We will bird the ranch roads with stops on level open areas. Scopes will be handy but not necessary. A two-way radio per car would be helpful.

Roxborough State Park

Sunday, April 29

8:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Alison Kondler

Email: birdtrills@gmail.com

Phone: 303-904-9140

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 6

Directions: Meet at Roxborough State Park parking lot. State park pass or day pass required.

We will start at the Visitor Center for a presentation on useful techniques to memorize bird sounds. This will be an easy, slow-paced hike of approximately 1.5 miles to practice identifying the local birds.

Knowing Bird's Relationship Makes Birding More Enjoyable

By Robert Righter

Let's say we've been birding at Cherry Creek Reservoir during a morning in early March. There is not much action, just ho-hum birds for a paltry list of eight bird species: Mallard, Common Merganser, Western Grebe, Red-tailed Hawk, Ring-billed Gull, Black-capped Chickadee, Black-billed Magpie, and a Western Meadowlark. No need to broadcast this list around.

Now, let's look at this list from a broader perspective. Our original list of eight bird species represents seven different bird families. The Mallard, a dabbling duck, and the Common Merganser, which dives to hunt food, are both in the family Anatidae, along with other ducks, goldeneyes, mergansers, scoters, widgeons, teals, swans, and geese. The Western Grebe, another diver, is in the family Podicipedidae, along with the other grebes. This suggests that, in spite of sharing a hunting behavior with the Western Grebe, the Common Merganser is more closely related to the Mallard.

The remaining five birds on our short list of species are all in different families. Refocusing on the relationship between species through their family affiliation and the genera within those families could raise some interesting questions.

For example, what process of locomotion do different genera of ducks use while swimming on the water's surface as well as beneath the surface? How are grebes able to just sink into the water? How does the Western Grebe genus differ in feeding habits from the other grebes within the family? What are the various hunting techniques that different genera of hawks use to capture their prey? Why is the Ring-billed Gull often the most numerous gull species in the winter in Colorado? How come the Black-capped Chickadee is often the group leader for mixed species flocks during winter? Are there really recognizable differences between the Eastern and Western Meadowlarks?

Being inquisitive about what we did see can often bring more satisfaction than the actual number and variety of birds we see on bird outing. You can find list of bird families on the [IOC World Bird List website](#). The official Colorado Bird Checklist also lists the birds by family (the Latin name follows the English name in parentheses). You can find the list on the [Colorado Field Ornithologists website](#).

Spring Birding Festivals Continued...

By Mary Cay Burger and Sharon Tinianow

Following up on the article in the March *Lark Bunting*, here are more birding festivals to consider.

April 6 - 8, 2018

Nebraska Prairie Chicken Festival

Calamus Outfitters/Switzer Ranch, Burwell, NE

This festival aims to celebrate prairie grouse species. Lek tours occur in the cool early morning at both Sharp-tailed Grouse and Greater Prairie-chicken leks. Meals are provided, along with speakers and entertainment. Lodging is available, but book early. Lek tours are also available March 15-April 15. For information, visit Nebraska Prairie Chicken Festival, call 308-346-4697 or email hbswitzer@ntc.net.

April 13-15, 2018

Olympic Birdfest

North Olympic Peninsula, Washington

Enjoy guided birding trips, boat tours, live auction & raffle, gala banquet, and more. The featured speaker is nature guide/photographer Claudio Vidal. BirdFest registration at www.olympicbirdfest.org. A festival pre-trip is a three-day, two-night birding/sightseeing cruise of the San Juan Islands on April 10-12. A post trip to Neah Bay is on April 16-17. Register separately at www.pugetsoundexpress.com/audubon.

April 27-29, 2018

Mountain Plover Festival

Karval, CO

This is a weekend full of bird watching, wildlife viewing tours, entertainment, history, arts and crafts, antiques and lots of good food. You can mingle with farmers and ranchers, learn about conservation practices, and tour private land that would normally not be accessible. For information, visit www.mountainploverfestival.com.

May 9-13, 2018

Ute Mountain Mesa Verde Birding Festival

Cortez, CO

The annual Ute Mountain Mesa Verde Birding Festival provides an opportunity to experience alpine and mesa forests, as well as scenic desert canyons in the Four Corners region of Colorado. A wide variety of birds, both migratory and resident, visit the areas meadows, pastures, cultivated areas. Some species, like Lucy's Warbler, are found nowhere else in Colorado. Tours that combine birding with archaeology, ecology, and history are featured, along with lectures, an art show, and social hours. For information, visit <https://cortezculturalcenter.org/birding-festival>.

May 17-20, 2018

Colorado Field Ornithologists Convention

Longmont, CO

Eastern Boulder County is the focus for field trips associated with this annual gathering of birders. For details, visit <https://cobirds.org>.

August 18 - 19, 2018

Raptor Fest 2018

Silt, CO

The Western slope of Colorado is home to 27 different species of raptors. For information, contact Chadd's Walking with Wildlife by phone at 970-812-8258 or via email at chaddswalkingwithwildlife@gmail.com.

Denver Field Ornithologists

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January	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
February	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
March	Bill Wuerthele	303-333-2519
April	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
May	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
June	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
July	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
August	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
September	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
October	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
November	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
December	Jill Boice	303-863-7580

DFO logo by Radeaux

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THE LARK BUNTING

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COBirds	Internet bird-sighting discussion list	cobirds@googlegroups.com
DMNS Liaison	Jeff Stephenson	jstephenson@dmns.org
Tuesday Birders	Mary Keithler	mkeithler@yahoo.com
	Backup contact, Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net

DFO MEETING LOCATION

Meetings are held each month except May, June, July, and December at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science and are open to the public. Exact dates, speaker information, and cancellations will be posted on the DFO website (<http://dfobirds.org>).

The Lark Bunting

DFO publishes The Lark Bunting monthly. Readers are encouraged to submit original articles, book reviews, or photos for publication. Please submit articles by the 1st of the month to Sharon Tinianow, editor, at sharontinianow@gmail.com. Please submit photos of birds or of bird outings as image files to Jim Esten, photo editor, at jcesten@gmail.com. Credit will be given to authors and photographers. The editors reserve the right to select suitable articles and photos for publication and to edit any selected materials.

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Thank you for your contribution to our Research, Education, and Conservation Grant Fund:

Emily Braker, Sally Polk and Catherine Carr, Gregg Goodrich, Jack Bellomo and Chris Goulart, Thomas "Tim" and Candice Johnson, Ashley Thompson, Jennifer and Charles Thornton-Kolbe, Karen von Saltza, Charlene and Bruce Warneke.

Upcoming Speakers

The Denver Field Ornithologists monthly meetings are held in Ricketson Auditorium at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science in City Park.

These meetings are free and open to the public and occur from 7 to 8:30 p.m. on Mondays of each month August through April (except December).

Check below for the dates. Park on the north side of the Museum and enter in the north side security/employee entrance and tell the guard that you are there for the DFO meeting.

Occasionally, a meeting may be moved to a different location in the museum. These changes are announced in *The Lark Bunting* and posted on this website.

Nathan Pieplow (Mar. 19)
End of the World: Siberian Wildlife

Francis Commercon (Apr. 16)
Bird Conservation in China

Denver Field Ornithologists Membership Application

Join online at <http://dfobirds.org>, or by mail.

DFO memberships expire Dec. 31; valid for the next year if paid after Oct. 1.

DFO provides grants to individuals or organizations whose mission includes ornithological research, education, and conservation.

DFO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

☐ Annual family membership (electronic <i>The Lark Bunting</i>)	\$	25
☐ Annual family membership (mailed <i>The Lark Bunting</i>)	\$	40
☐ Student membership (age ≤ 26)	\$	10
☐ Research, Education, & Conservation Grant Fund donation	\$	_____
Total	\$	_____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____

Email (legible) _____

(Must include for electronic *The Lark Bunting*)

Check payable to DFO and send to Sue Summers, 2364 W Costilla Ave, Littleton, CO 80120-3502

The Lark Bunting
Denver Field Ornithologists
10826 E. Maplewood Place
Englewood, CO 80111-5742



The Lark Bunting

DENVER FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS/MAY 2018/VOL 54 NO 5

[HTTP://DFOBIRDS.ORG](http://dfobirds.org)

Field Trips

Register for DFO field trips on the website or contact the leader directly. Bring your own binoculars, water, snacks or lunch, and sunscreen. Dress for the weather. More detailed directions and descriptions of each trip can be found on the website. **Please be considerate and delete your reservation if you are unable to attend a trip for which you have registered.**

NOTE: DFO Big Year 2018 Rules and Regulations can be found on the website.

Ken Caryl Valley Area Tuesday, May 1 6:00 AM - 1:00 PM

David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 10

We will visit a few areas in search of a variety of birds at private Ken Caryl Ranch. Plan for up to 3-5 miles of mostly easy terrain, with some uphill and single track trails.

Northeastern Colorado Friday, May 4 - Saturday, May 5 6:30 PM - 5:30 PM

Chuck Hundertmark and Paul Slingsby.
Email: chundertmark8@gmail.com
Phone: 303-604-0531
Trail Difficulty: Strenuous
Maximum Participants: 10

This is an intensive overnight trip. Visits to Red Lion,

Continued on page 2

Monthly meetings: April

DFO monthly programs take place at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, Ricketson Auditorium, beginning at 7 p.m. Enter through the north side security/employee entrance and tell the guard you are here for the DFO meeting. PLEASE NOTE: There are no monthly programs in May, June, and July. Programs will resume in August.



Francis Commercon

Monday, April 16, 7:00 p.m. Bird Conservation in China Francis Commercon

The speaker for the April monthly program is Francis Commercon, a senior at Colorado State University studying Fish, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology and Biological Science. He has been passionate about birds and the Mandarin language since elementary school. He combined these passions to study bird conservation in China for an honors thesis in 2017.

Birds excite and inspire people in all parts of the world. People's relationship with avifauna critically influences how ecosystems are either protected or degraded. This presentation will explore appreciation of birds from the perspectives of a suburban American youth and individuals in a rural village in southern China. Commercon will outline the opportunities he has had to develop a conservation ethic with mentors in the Denver area, as well as his experience engaging peers with birds at Colorado State University. Commercon also will share his observations from seven months living among the Dai people of Xishuangbanna Prefecture. He hopes to spark a discussion about the diversity of conservation values across cultures and socioeconomic levels.

Commercon has volunteered hundreds of hours with the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies' bird banding and hawk-watch programs, the Second Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas, and other projects. As a university student, Commercon studied the impact of flooding on bird communities in Chatfield State Park and devoted a great deal of time monitoring raptors at Lory State Park for Colorado Parks and Wildlife. With his friend Megan Miller, Commercon co-founded the CSU Field Ornithologists, a very active student birding organization at the university.

Field Trips

Continued from page 1

Tamarack, and Prewitt Reservoir are possible. We will stop at Brush Prairie Ponds, if time allows. We will target eastern specialties, migrating shorebirds, waterbirds, and raptors.

eBird Hotspot Romp

Saturday, May 5

6:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Chris Goulart

Email: cgoulart001@comcast.net

Phone: 303-941-4881

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 11

We will be celebrating the eBird Global Big Day by visiting the hottest eBird Hotspots along the Front Range. We will start at Chico Basin Ranch for the dawn chorus. Then, we'll take a quick trip north to Castlewood Canyon State Park. After that, we will bee-line to Barr Lake.

Rueter-Hess Reservoir (Douglas Co.)

Saturday, May 5

8:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Tim Ryan & Diane Roberts

Email: tryan4thebirds@yahoo.com

Phone: 720-545-5084

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 10

We will first bird at the Barr CCC Park in Parker next to Cherry Creek to check for riparian birds. The next stop will be Rueter-Hess Reservoir, Parker Water Dept's new reservoir, that is not yet open to the public. We could see grassland species and waterfowl.

Continued on page 3

Cormorants and the Evolution of Beauty



From the President Chuck Hundertmark

I've been fascinated by Double-crested Cormorants for nearly 50 years. Until recently, my interest has mostly been in the location and changes in breeding populations. Ornithologist Richard O. Prum, however, has started me thinking about the breeding crests of this cormorant. The breeding crests are the earlike feathers on the head that give the species its name. They appear only during the breeding season and are sometimes black and sometimes white.

In his 2017 book *The Evolution of Beauty*, Prum argues that most biologists have misconstrued the concept of sexual selection first described by Charles Darwin in *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*. Darwin proposed sexual selection to explain features like courtship displays, songs, and elegant plumage like the cormorant's crests. Although these features do not directly improve the survival prospects of an individual, they do improve that individual's chances of reproducing by making it more attractive to a member of the opposite sex.

Prevailing theory among ornithologists treats sexual selection as a special case of natural selection, commonly called "survival of the fittest." Prum asserts that sexual selection is an independent process of coevolution between the brain (mind) of one sex and the appearance and behavior of the other. In most cases, it is the female's mental image of beauty that shapes the appearance and behavior of the male. The resulting elegant plumages and displays may actually threaten survival by exposing the bird to predation.

Reading Prum brought to mind the variation in breeding plumes of Double-crested Cormorants. On a recent visit to Belmar Park, I noticed that the cormorants in the small colony there all seem to have black crests. The same is true of most cormorants at the much larger Denver City Park colony. There, however, you occasionally find an adult with white crests.

Black crests are predominant in eastern populations of the species, while white crests are predominant in western populations. Front Range colonies, thus, appear to be part of the eastern population.

The variation in cormorant crest color raises interesting questions:

- Both male and female Double-crested Cormorants have crests. If Prum's idea of coevolution is right, do both sexes evolve the mental model of beauty that shapes plume color?

CORMORANTS, continued from page 2

- When and where did the split occur between preference for black plumes in the East and white plumes in the West?
- How do we get occasional white-crested cormorants at Duck Lake in a predominantly black-crested colony?

There may be a master's thesis in there, if not a doctoral dissertation. To learn more about Prum's thinking, attend his talk at Denver Museum of Nature and Science on May 1. You can find the details on the DMNS website at <http://www.dmns.org/learn/adults/after-hours/the-evolution-of-beauty/>.



Bald Eagle with American Coot (Harriman Lake, April 2018)

Photo credit: Jim Esten

The Evolution of Beauty at DMNS

On May 1, the Denver Museum of Nature and Science will present a special program that may be of interest to Lark Bunting readers.

In his new book, *The Evolution of Beauty: How Darwin's Forgotten Theory of Mate Choice Shapes the Animal World—and Us*, evolutionary ornithologist Richard O. Prum, PhD, examines how mating preferences - what Darwin termed “the taste for the beautiful” - create the extraordinary range of ornamentation in the animal world. Prum will explore how birds offer some of the most notable examples, from intricate courtship dances to elaborate plumage with bright colors. Take a closer look at Club-winged Manakins who sing with their wings, and Great Argus Pheasants who dazzle prospective mates with a four-foot-wide cone of feathers covered in golden 3D spheres. You will also discover how this framework provides important insights into the evolution of human sexuality.

The program begins at 7 pm in the Ricketson Auditorium. Tickets may be purchased on the [DMNS website](http://www.dmns.org). A book sale and signing will follow the program. The program is presented in partnership with Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, Audubon Society of Greater Denver, and Audubon Rockies.

Field Trips

Continued from page 2

Denver City Park (Denver County)

Sunday, May 6

6:30 AM - 11:00 AM

Patrick O'Driscoll

Email: patodrisk@gmail.com

Phone: 303-885-6955

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Expect to see all three big waterbird species (cormorants, egrets, herons) nesting in the island rookeries at Duck and Ferril lakes. We'll look for nesting raptors (red-tailed and Cooper's hawk), spring migrants passing through, and summer residents, too.

Southeastern Colorado

Tues, May 8 - Wed, May 9

7:30 AM - 4:00 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Maximum Participants: 8

This 2-Day trip is at the prime time of spring! We will seek regional specialties, visiting good spots for migrant land birds and catching migrating shorebirds. This trip will visit a number of locations in Otero, Bent, Kiowa, Prowers, and maybe even Baca Counties.

Fountain Creek Regional Park (El Paso County)

Wednesday, May 9

6:00 AM - 2:30 PM

Diane Roberts

Email: Samatha576@aol.com

Phone: 720-278-9025

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 7

Continued on page 4

Field Trips

Continued from page 3

This is a half-day trip to search for ducks, raptors, and songbirds that can be unique to this park. Winter Wrens and uncommon warblers have been seen here during this season. Wear layers and strong boots.

Eldorado Canyon State Park Sunday, May 13 6:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Karen Drozda
Email: drozforte@aol.com
Phone: 303-388-0891
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 12

We will be hiking the Fowler and Goshawk Ridge trails. The route parallels the Dakota hogback and a recent burn area where Lewis's Woodpeckers have nested. Habitats range from dense shrubbery to open ponderosa pine forest.

Cherry Creek SP Wetlands Loop (Arapahoe County) Sunday, May 13 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Karen von Saltza
and Bill Wuerthele
Email: kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Phone: 303-941-4881
Trail Difficulty: Moderate

This is a half day of walking that passes through most of the important habitats found in the park over a distance of about 3 miles. Trails could be slippery or muddy.

Roxborough State Park Sunday, May 13 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Alison Kondler
Email: birdtrills@gmail.com
Phone: 303-904-9140

Continued on page 5

DFO announces 6 grants for 2018

By Candice Johnson

The Research, Education and Conservation Committee is pleased to announce the award of six grants in 2018 thanks to the generosity of the DFO members who contributed to the fund in 2017. The total amount awarded was \$5,800. The projects we selected for funding are:

- Multi-scale avian habitat selection using Flammulated Owls as a model: Scott Yanco is a graduate student at UC Denver returning for his second year of funding from us. He continues to study results of nesting behavior before and after a prescribed burn in the Rio Grande National Forest.
- Choice of nesting and foraging sites by Mountain Plovers in the Pawnee Grassland: Tyler Michels is a graduate student at UC Denver who also applied for a second year of funding. His research uses GPS loggers attached to the birds to determine how they use native prairie vs. agricultural lands.
- Greater Sage Grouse response to surface mine disturbance in northwestern Colorado: Alyssa Kircher is a University of Wisconsin graduate student who is studying in Moffat County near Craig.
- Chico Basin Ranch bird banding station and educational program for elementary students: The Ranchlands Foundation defrays the cost of admission for students visiting the station. Bird Conservancy of the Rockies provides the banders for this ongoing program.
- Black Swift movement ecology project: Rob Sparks is a Bird Conservancy of the Rockies researcher who will be recapturing swifts he tagged in 2017 and redeploying them. He studying where they feed while nesting and whether they are negatively affected by pesticides applied for pine beetle control.
- Cattle stocking rates and productivity of raptors on the Central Plains Experimental Range in northeast Colorado: James and Angela Dwyer are studying data accumulated for 50 years on the three raptors in greatest need for conservation: Ferruginous Hawk, Golden Eagle, and Swainson's Hawk.

All six of the 2018 grant recipients have been contacted and will provide reports for publication in *The Lark Bunting*. They will also be posted on the DFO website at <http://dfobirds.org/Grants/>. Many thanks to my co-chair, Carol Cochran, and committee member Tina Jones for their work reviewing proposals.

eBird Tip of the Month

By Gregg Goodrich

eBird will be doing its Global Big Day again this year on Saturday, May 5. You can participate by submitting one or more birding trip reports to eBird for that date. Last year's Global Big Day included more than 20,000 people from 160 countries submitting lists that tallied a total of 6,638 species. You can see the statistics from last year on the eBird website at <https://ebird.org/globalbigday>.

Shorebirds are the theme for this year's Global Big Day. Crossing many countries and continents, shorebirds connect and amaze us all with their lengthy migrations. The Black-bellied Plover is featured on the emblem for this year's Global Big Day.

Keep track of how the day is going in real time with the eBird link above. Join in the fun and submit your birds seen via the eBird mobile app or directly online at www.eBird.org. All birds count, but make your lists more meaningful by observing the following key practices:

- Submit complete checklists that include all the birds seen
- Keep counts of all birds seen
- If you leave one location to bird at another location, close out your eBird list and start a new list at your next location

Be a part of eBird's biggest day! Mark your calendar now for May 5. Bird your backyard, local patch, or chase that rare bird in your area. Submit your list to eBird by Tuesday, May 8.

Welcome to new DFO members

Jared Del Rosso, Denver; Jessica Diaz and Manuel Jose Diaz, Denver; Gail Ferber, Denver; Pat Heller, Lafayette; Eric Kline, Littketon; Jean McClenathen, Lakewood; Matthew Brown and Beth Montgomery, Centennial; David and Tresa Moulton, Steamboat Springs; Lynne Price, Evergreen; Kris Saucke, Centennial; Scott Gaffri and Camille Schiraldi, Parker

Thank you for your contribution to the Research, Education and Conservation Grant Fund:

Laurie Chotena, Jim Esten, Eric Kline, Matthew Brown and Beth Montgomery, Randall Nelson

Field Trips

Continued from page 4

Trail Difficulty: Easy
Maximum Participants: 6

This is a mnemonic-driven, birding by ear trip. We will start with an indoor presentation and then take our new found skills outside to study bird sounds on an easy 1 1/2 mile hike. A wide variety of bird species are possible.

Elbert County
Monday, May 14
5:15 AM - 4:00 PM
David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 7

We'll explore parts of Elbert County, driving roads and seeing what we can find. We will try for Mountain Plover, McCown's Longspur, Cassin's Sparrow and dozens of Cassin's Kingbirds.

Deer Creek Canyon
Tuesday, May 15
5:00 AM - 12:00 PM
David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 8

This is a great opportunity to study and appreciate bird song. We expect Ovenbird, Eastern Phoebe, Lazuli Bunting, Dusky Flycatcher, Solitary Vireo, White-throated Swift, and more.

Chatfield SP - Highline Canal
Saturday, May 19
5:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Continued on page 6

Field Trips

Continued from page 5

David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 12

We will bird along the Platte looking for Least Flycatcher, American Redstart, Red-eyed Vireo, and a strong set of other riparian nesters. We will visit accessible lake-viewing spots to see what waterbirds are around and look for rarities.

Second Creek Open Space (Commerce City/Adams Co.) Sunday, May 20

6:15 AM - 11:00 AM

Patrick O'Driscoll
Email: patodrisk@gmail.com
Phone: 303-885-6955
Trail Difficulty: Easy

First DFO trip at a new destination! Grasslands and creek-side marshes are home to prairie songbirds, raptors and 20-plus other Plains species, plus spring migrants heading north.

deKoevend Park Wednesday, May 23 7:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Jared Del Rosso
Email: jared.delrosso@gmail.com
Phone: 6172756252
Trail Difficulty: Easy
Maximum Participants: 6

Surrounded by the High Line Canal and bisected by the Big Dry Creek, Centennial's deKoevend Park provides rich riparian habitat for spring migrant and local breeders. We'll walk two to three miles on the mostly flat canal trail and through the park's playing fields.

Continued on page 7

March flight log

By David Suddjian

DFO's Big Year 2018 added 32 new species in March, bringing the total to 174 species. Our pace is 59 species (51 percent) over the average for the prior five years! We conducted 17 field trips in March. Field trips ranging farther afield included trips to the far northeast in Sedgewick, Logan, and Washington counties, one to the far eastern counties of Yuma and Kit Carson, and one to Fremont County.



Species on the Colorado list were coded to help our planning:

- Code 1: expected without special planning
(193 species total from the state list)
- Code 2: expected but some basic planning is needed
(77 species total)
- Code 3: specialties requiring trips to particular places at the right time
(69 species total)
- Code 4: rarities that we can't specifically plan to encounter
(163 species total)



DFO birders on the field trip to First Creek led by Pat O'Driscoll

Photo credit: Mark Amershek

By the end of March, we had found 118 (61 percent) of the Code 1 species, 29 (38 percent) of the Code 2 species, 18 (26 percent) of the Code 3 species, and 9 (6 percent) of the Code 4 species. Our new Code 3 species added in March, in order of discovery, were: Glaucous Gull at Prewitt Reservoir, Red-bellied Woodpecker at Tamarack SWA, Winter Wren at Fort Morgan, Northern Pygmy-Owl and Northern Saw-whet Owl near Bailey, Northern Cardinal at the South Republican SWA in Yuma County, and Greater Prairie-Chicken in Akron, Washington County.

FLIGHT LOG, continued from page 6

Our new Code 4 species was Common Redpoll at Jumbo Reservoir. Special mentions among the Code 4s go to the Northern Saw-whet Owl, which was recorded by DFO for the first time in 10 years; the Northern Cardinal, which was recorded for on the second year; the Red-bellied Woodpecker and Winter Wren, both of which were recorded for the third time; and the Mountain Plover and Common Redpoll, both of which were recorded for the fourth year.



Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch (Park County, February 12)

Photo credit: Jim Esten

According to eBird, an additional 75 species were reported in Colorado during January to March that were not found in that period by DFO on our field trips. Many of these are species just returning at the end of March and DFO will likely find them later in the spring. Others are species that are rare in winter but expected to be found later in the year. A small number are resident species that we still have a good chance to find later. And, finally, some are species that occur in regions of the state into which DFO has not yet ventured.

There are at least two species that we might so far consider to be “misses” for the Big Year. The Harris’s Hawk wintering at Fort Collins became particularly elusive by the time DFO trips reached up to Larimer County in February. Several Pine Warblers wintered in metro Denver. All were away from the birding areas we visited and no trip attempted to chase them.

Field Trips

Continued from page 6

Sedalia to Cheesman for Woodpeckers

Thursday, May 24

6:30 AM - 4:00 PM

Chris Blakeslee & Paul Slingsby

Email: ChrisABla@aol.com

Phone: 303-694-4670

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 10

We will target 7 woodpecker species including American Three-toed and Lewis’s, and other nesting mountain species. Expect to walk 1-2 miles off-trail in moderate terrain with minimal altitude gain.

Front Range Owling

Thursday, May 24

5:00 PM - 11:30 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 8

This trip will seek Flammulated Owl, Northern Pygmy-Owl, and Northern Saw-whet Owl. Our owling locations will be announced shortly before the trip but will likely be located in Jefferson or Douglas counties.

North Park

Sat, May 26 - Mon, May 28

6:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Chuck Hundertmark

and Paul Slingsby

Email: chundertmark8@gmail.com

Phone: 303-604-0531

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Maximum Participants: 10

This is a three-day trip with two options for meeting: arrive on Friday night and

Continued on page 9

March Program Review

Tim Johnson

On March 19, DFO meeting attendees had the privilege of hearing from Nathan Pieplow, associate director of the Global Studies Residential Academic Program at the University of Colorado Boulder and author of *Field Guide to Bird Sounds of Eastern North America*.

Pieplow, a frequent presenter at DFO programs, put his undergraduate degree in Russian to good use last June on a trip to Siberia. He revisited old haunts at Irkutsk State University, where he studied 20 years ago, continued on to Lake Baikal, traveled north to the decrepit Arctic port of Tiksi via the city of Yakutz, and, finally, visited a remote weather outpost on the Lena River delta, a bird nesting area of world significance. His richly illustrated DFO presentation, “*End of the World: capturing Siberia’s wildlife on video*,” summarized a trip full of Russian drama, some hardship, and entrancing video of mostly charismatic birds. There’s no way text can do justice to Pieplow’s journey, but you can see the video of his presentation at <https://dfobirds.org/Programs/Past.aspx>.



Nathan Pieplow
Photo credit: Molly Steele

Pieplow briefly introduced Lake Baikal, the world’s deepest lake – more than 1 mile and getting deeper, thanks to its location above a subduction zone where two of Earth’s tectonic plates collide. It contains 20 percent of the world’s fresh water. Eighty percent of the aquatic species found there are endemic to Lake Baikal, including the world’s only freshwater seal. At Lake Baikal, Pieplow obtained the second video ever taken of the Baikal Bush Warbler. The lake’s principal water source is the Selenge River, whose delta is a huge area of marshes and a World Natural Heritage site. After complicated and expensive negotiations, Pieplow and his companions were able to spend 24 hours at a field station in the delta. He showed videos of White and Citrine Wagtails, a charming Long-Eared Owl, and nesting Azure Tits, a principal target bird. In nearby steppe habitat, similar to Colorado’s high prairie, he captured footage of Demoiselle Cranes, and – yes! – wild gerbils in their native habitat.

The next stop, Yakutz, was supposed to be a brief pause on the way to the coast of the Arctic Ocean. But inclement flying weather grounded Pieplow in Yakutz for the entire weekend of the summer solstice. The timing was good because Yakutz, built entirely on permafrost, has the coldest winter temperatures of any

major city in the world. While birding in the taiga, or boreal forest environment outside the city, Pieplow and his companions heard peculiar, grouse-like growling, which turned out to be “hush” calls that Russian Great Grey Owls use to alert their chicks. These calls, and Pieplow’s spectacular video of the owl family, provided evidence later that Eurasian and North American Great Grey Owls might be different species.

Finally, Pieplow reached Tiksi, which he described as “post-apocalyptic,” a largely abandoned military port town whose population had dropped precipitously after the collapse of the Soviet Union. After more delays, including 12 hours on a windy Arctic beach huddled around a bonfire and wearing every scrap of clothing they had brought, Pieplow and his group arrived at their destination: a weather outpost in the Lena River delta from which they hoped to travel to bird-rich delta islands. After further indignities, including failed boat engines and weather too windy to venture out on the water, they were able to catch unique glimpses of Arctic birds and other wildlife. Pieplow showed long lekking sequences of the Ruff, a strange and beautiful shorebird species that has three classes of male. He also shared video of an Arctic Fox being harassed by a Pomarine Jaeger while stealing eggs from nests of White-Fronted Geese and burying the eggs for later consumption. His video included shots of Baikal Teal, flying Ross’ Gulls, Steller’s and King Eiders, reindeer, and, to conclude the presentation, a nesting Snowy Owl.

How a tiny migratory owl can teach us about the changing role of fire in the American West

By Scott Yanco (PhD candidate, University of Colorado Denver)

As most Coloradans know, wildfires in western North America have been changing in character and frequency. Recent fires such as High Park, Waldo, Fourmile Canyon, and Hayman are examples. The changes in fire regimes across the West arise in part because of past management practices that allowed combustible fuels to accumulate (Covington and Moore 1994, Fulé et al. 2014). Acting in concert with a warming climate, this process leads to fires that burn larger areas at higher severity (Brown and Shepperd 2001, Westerling et al. 2006).

Within Colorado's mid- and low-elevation montane forests, these shifting patterns modify habitats that, ironically, depend on fire – just a different kind of fire. Historically, these forests experienced frequent fires (Brown and Shepperd 2001) that were relatively mild in intensity, typically burning along the ground and leaving mature trees unscathed (Covington and Moore 1994, Sherriff et al. 2014). Now, instead of low-severity burns leading to old-growth stands, these fires are consuming large swaths of montane forest, sometimes killing nearly 100 percent of canopy trees and leaving behind landscapes that bear little resemblance to the mature pine forests that once dominated the region (Fulé et al. 2014).

While there are many factors to consider surrounding changing fire regimes, one important consideration is the effect that such changes may have on the animal inhabitants of montane forests, particularly those strongly adapted to the mature forests previously maintained by historical fire regimes. One such species, the Flammulated Owl (*Psiloscops flammeolus*), is a U.S. Forest Service "Sensitive Species" and a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service "Species of Special Concern" that shows strong preference for older forests (Linkhart et al. 1998, Linkhart and Reynolds 2006).

Now the forest types that this species prefers are at risk of loss to changing fire regimes. For example, after the Hayman Fire in 2002, radio-tracked owls established breeding home ranges in areas of unburned or low-severity burned forest, avoiding the stands that experienced the highest severity fire (Yanco and Linkhart 2018). This casts doubt on whether our future forests will be able to support the continued presence of species adapted to life in these formerly fire-maintained habitats.

Despite what we learned after the Hayman Fire, questions remain about how this sensitive species responds to fire. Specifically, we don't know how the owls' prey species (moths) respond to fire, how distribution of nesting cavities changes after fire, or how the owls' decisions about which habitats to use are influenced by fire.

Field Trips

Continued from page 7

meet early Saturday for breakfast or join the group later on Saturday morning. Lodging recommendations and additional trip information will be sent to registrants.

Chico Basin Ranch

Sunday, May 27

6:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Mark Amershek

Email: mammershek@msn.com

Phone: 303-329-8646

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 15

Chico Basin Ranch is a working cattle ranch located in El Paso/Pueblo counties southeast of Colorado Springs. We will bird along the ranch roads with stops on level open areas such as ponds, wetlands, and grasslands.

Chatfield State Park -

Marina Sandspit

Sunday, May 27

7:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Gregg Goodrich

Email: GreggGoodrich@gmail.com

Phone: 303-655-9135

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 12

We will bird all the standard Chatfield State Park birding locations on the Douglas County side beginning at the Sandspit. Shore birds, lake birds, land birds, and late migrants are all possible.

A new and ongoing study, generously supported by the Denver Field Ornithologists, provides a unique opportunity to explore these questions. The Rio Grande National Forest is planning a prescribed burn of the Hot Creek Research Natural Area (RNA), a relatively undisturbed landscape of ponderosa pine uplands bisected by canyons forested by quaking aspen, white fir, and blue spruce. Land managers use prescribed fires to reduce fuel loads, simultaneously reducing the risk of future high-severity fires and restoring a historically typical disturbance regime to the ecosystem.



Flammulated Owl
Photo credit: Scott Yanco

To date, our research has collected movement data on more than a dozen owls in the Hot Creek RNA over two seasons preceding the fire. We have also run blacklight moth traps to assess populations of the owls' prey and have located and characterized hundreds of cavity-bearing trees representing potentially suitable nesting habitat. We have also begun quantifying the composition and structure of the pre-fire forests used by the owls. This dataset will serve as baseline information to which we can compare post-fire results after the prescribed burn, which is anticipated to take place in 2018. Specifically, we will consider how the owls' movement patterns and habitat preferences are affected by fire and whether the available prey and/or nesting habitat influence the decisions they make.

This project is a collaboration among many organizations, including Colorado College, University of Colorado Denver, Rio Grande

National Forest, and The Smithsonian Institution's Migratory Connectivity Project. On top of the important questions our study seeks to address, projects like this also serve as vital educational venues, creating opportunities for numerous undergraduate students to gain valuable experience participating in academic research. We have also used the project as a platform for outreach to land managers in Colorado to learn about the ecological implications of fire, including the beneficial role that fire can play. Despite the importance of addressing these questions and providing this platform for education and outreach, financial support for projects like this is increasingly difficult to acquire. This reality highlights the role that groups such as DFO play in maintaining efforts to better understand the avifauna of Colorado and the unique and dynamic ecosystems they inhabit.

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April	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
May	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
June	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
July	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
August	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
September	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
October	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
November	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
December	Jill Boice	303-863-7580

DFO logo by Radeaux

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DFO MEETING LOCATION

Meetings are held each month except May, June, July, and December at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science and are open to the public. Exact dates, speaker information, and cancellations will be posted on the DFO website (<http://dfobirds.org>).

The Lark Bunting

DFO publishes The Lark Bunting monthly. Readers are encouraged to submit original articles, book reviews, or photos for publication. Please submit articles by the 1st of the month to Sharon Tinianow, editor, at sharontinianow@gmail.com. Please submit photos of birds or of bird outings as image files to Jim Esten, photo editor, at jcesten@gmail.com. Credit will be given to authors and photographers. The editors reserve the right to select suitable articles and photos for publication and to edit any selected materials.

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Upcoming Speakers

The Denver Field Ornithologists monthly meetings are held in Ricketson Auditorium at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science in City Park.

These meetings are free and open to the public and occur from 7 to 8:30 p.m. on Mondays of each month August through April (except December).

Check below for the dates. Park on the north side of the Museum and enter in the north side security/employee entrance and tell the guard that you are there for the DFO meeting.

Occasionally, a meeting may be moved to a different location in the museum. These changes are announced in *The Lark Bunting* and posted on the website.

Francis Commercon (Apr. 16)
Bird Conservation in China

Denver Field Ornithologists Membership Application

Join online at <http://dfobirds.org>, or by mail.

DFO memberships expire Dec. 31; valid for the next year if paid after Oct. 1.

DFO provides grants to individuals or organizations whose mission includes ornithological research, education, and conservation.

DFO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

- | | | |
|---|----|-------|
| ☐ Annual family membership (electronic <i>The Lark Bunting</i>) | \$ | 25 |
| ☐ Student membership (age ≤ 26) | \$ | 10 |
| ☐ Research, Education, & Conservation Grant Fund donation | \$ | _____ |

Total	\$	_____
-------	----	-------

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____

Email (legible) _____

(Must include for electronic *The Lark Bunting*)

Check payable to DFO and send to:

Sue Summers, 2364 W Costilla Ave, Littleton, CO 80120-3502

The Lark Bunting
Denver Field Ornithologists
10826 E. Maplewood Place
Englewood, CO 80111-5742



The Lark Bunting

DENVER FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS/JUNE-JULY 2018/VOL 54 NO 6-7

[HTTP://DFOBIRDS.ORG](http://dfobirds.org)

June Field Trips are Now Open!

Register for DFO field trips on the [website](#) or contact the leader directly. Bring your own binoculars, water, snacks or lunch, and sunscreen. Dress for the weather. More detailed directions and descriptions of each trip can be found on the website. **Please be considerate and delete your reservation if you are unable to attend a trip for which you have registered.**

NOTE: DFO Big Year 2018 Rules and Regulations can be found on the [website](#).

Cherry Creek State Park (Arapahoe County)

Friday, June 1

6:00 AM - 12:30 PM

Diane Roberts

Email: Samatha576@aol.com

Phone: 720-278-9025

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 11

Grand Junction

Fri, June 1 - Sun, June 3

12:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Wendy Wibbens and

Sue Summers

Email: wibbwj@aol.com

Phone: 303-330-1175

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Maximum Participants: 10

Ken Caryl Valley Area

Friday, June 1

6:30 PM - 9:30 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 10

Continued on page 2

Please note: this is the June/July issue. The next issue of *The Lark Bunting* will be the August issue, available in mid July.

Third Annual DFO Summer Picnic set for June 9 at Prospect Park

By Tom Behnfield

Combine an unbeatable suburban birding location with a day of fun and fellowship among your best birding buddies, and you have the third annual DFO Members Only Summer Picnic. And this year, the grilled goodies and beverages are on DFO!



DFO members enjoying the Annual Picnic in 2017.

Come join us on Saturday, June 9 in Prospect Park in the Wheatridge Green Belt. This year, instead of charging a set price for the potluck picnic, we ask you to consider a donation at the picnic to our DFO Research, Education & Conservation Grants Fund. This year, all donations made at the picnic will go to grants for projects in three areas of interest:

- Education that supports knowledge of birds,
- Research in ornithology
- Conservation of birds and their habitat

You can find [more information on the DFO Grants Fund on our website](#).

Prospect Park is just off 44th Avenue west of Kipling Boulevard. For directions, [click here](#). Arrive at 10 a.m. to bird this great Wheatridge Greenbelt location. The picnic itself begins at 11 a.m. Paths throughout the park are paved and fully accessible.

Continued on page 3

Field Trips

Continued from page 1

Roxborough State Park

Saturday, June 2

8:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Alison Kondler

Email: birdtrills@gmail.com

Phone: 303-904-9140

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 6

Eldorado Canyon State Park

Sunday, June 3

6:00 AM - 1:30 PM

Karen Drozda

Email: drozforte@aol.com

Phone: 303-388-0891

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 11

Fountain Creek Regional Park (El Paso County)

Friday, June 8

6:00 AM - 2:30 PM

Diane Roberts

Email: Samatha576@aol.com

Phone: 720-278-9025

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 7

Cherry Creek State Park Wetlands Loop (Arapahoe County)

Sunday, June 10

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Karen von Saltza

and Bill Wuerthele

Email: kvonsaltza@yahoo.com

Phone: 303-941-4881

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Elbert County

Monday, June 11

5:30 AM - 2:00 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 7

Continued on page 3

DFO Field Trips: A Scarce Commodity?



Photo: William Bond

From the President Chuck Hundertmark

It is ironic that DFO today offers more field trips per month than at any time in its history, yet spaces on those trips have become a scarce commodity. Because many of our increasingly popular trips have limits on the number of participants, the trips fill up early in the month and birders have a hard time getting a spot on the ones they want.

Six years or so ago, there were no limits on the number of trip participants. The option to limit the number of participants arose as we began to certify trip leaders and opened the online trip registration program.

Limiting trip participation is at the discretion of the individual trip leader. There are two main reasons for limits: It is easier and safer to manage road birding trips that involve long drives by managing fewer vehicles. Even on local trips, birding can be better in smaller groups.

Feedback from leaders and participants indicates they prefer small groups.

The dynamic that has emerged since the trip program changes is interesting. Many trips now fill up quickly, as soon as they go up on the website. And yet, by the time of the field trip, many of the original registrants have dropped off the list.

It appears that our registration process has made our field trips a scarce commodity, but that scarcity may be an illusion.

Here are two recent examples of this. In March, I led a trip to Walden Ponds in Boulder, with a limit of 10 birders. A week before the trip, there were two names on the wait list. Realizing we could easily accommodate two more people, I asked DFO Field Trip Director Karen von Saltza to up the limit on the online registration page to 12. By the morning of the trip, however, there were just nine of us birding.

Knowing of the demand for more trips with no participation limit, I did not set one for my April trip to the same destination. Walden Ponds is open enough for easy management of a larger group.

A week before the trip date, 16 people had registered. The morning of the trip, only eight of us went out to enjoy the spring arrivals.

If you are among those frustrated trying to get on popular trips, von Saltza offers some useful trip tips elsewhere in this issue of *The Lark Bunting*.

Continued on page 3

FIELD TRIPS, continued from page 2

If you are among those who fill your field trip calendar the first of every month, only to cancel your registration on many of the trips, please sign up only for those you are confident you can make. This gives others a chance to reserve a spot on good trips, too.

Finally, if you are a trip leader, consider posting more of your trips without a limit. There's a good chance that by trip day you'll still have a manageable number of participants. And, if you have a large turnout, consider it a sign of your popularity.

PICNIC, continued from page 1

DFO has rented a covered pavilion with seating and will provide picnickers with bratwursts and beverages. A vegetarian option will be available if you notify us in advance. As this is a potluck picnic, we also ask that each adult bring a dish to share for up to eight people. Here are the assignments:

- Last name beginning with A – H: Salad
- Last names beginning with I – Q: Side dish
- Last names beginning with R – Z: Dessert

We'll fire up the grill in time to begin serving lunch at about 11:45 a.m., so please plan to arrive with your potluck item by 11 a.m. so there's time to set it out and find a place to sit. If you can come earlier, join those of us who'll be out enjoying the great birding opportunities of Prospect park and the Wheatridge Green Belt.

Three things not to forget:

- Unlike our monthly public meetings and weekly field trips, the picnic is for DFO members and immediate family or "plus one" guests, not the general public. But encourage your birding friends who are not DFO members to join us!
- Unlike in previous years, there is no charge for this year's picnic. We are encouraging you to donate at the picnic to the DFO Grants Fund, so bring cash or your checkbook (no credit cards, thanks.)
- If you have a folding chair, bring it!

Please RSVP by June 7 online or phone picnic chair Tom Behnfield at 303-910-6858.

Field Trips

Continued from page 2

Huerfano County
Tuesday, June 12
4:30 AM - 6:00 PM
David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 9

Deer Creek Canyon
Wednesday, June 13
5:30 AM - 11:00 AM
David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 8

Bailey Nesting Area
(Summit County)
Thursday, June 14
5:30 AM - 5:30 PM
Paul Slingsby & Chris Blakeslee
Email: paslingsby@comcast.net
Phone: 720-347-5169
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 10

Upper Beaver Meadows
Rocky Mountain National Park
Friday, June 15
7:30 AM - 3:00 PM
Bill Wuerthele
Email: wuerthel@ecentral.com
Phone: 303-333-2519
Trail Difficulty: Strenuous
Maximum Participants: 10

Chatfield State Park
Saturday, June 16
5:30 AM - 11:00 AM
David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 12

Continued on page 4

Field Trips

Continued from page 3

First Creek at Denver Open Space Sunday, June 17

6:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Patrick O'Driscoll

Email: patodrisk@gmail.com

Phone: 303-885-6955

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Northeastern Colorado Mon, June 18 - Tues, June 19 4:30 AM - 7:00 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Maximum Participants: 10

Genesee Park (Denver Mountain Parks) Saturday, June 23

6:30 AM - 11:30 AM

Karen Drozda

Email: drozforte@aol.com

Phone: 303-388-0891

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 11

Denver City Park (Denver County) Sunday, June 24

6:30 AM - 11:00 AM

Patrick O'Driscoll

Email: patodrisk@gmail.com

Phone: 303-885-6955

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Rocky Mountain National Park (Larimer County) Sunday, June 24

8:00 AM - 1:30 PM

Candice Johnson

and Mary Cay Burger

Email: candice.johnson@

childrenscolorado.org

Phone: 303-329-8131

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Continued on page 6

April Program Review: Francis Commercon

By Dave Hill

Blending his twin passions for birding and the Mandarin Chinese language with his experiences living among the Dai people of southwestern China, Francis Commercon delighted the crowd at DFO's April 16 general meeting with stories of the human dimensions of bird conservation.

Commercon, a senior at Colorado State University and co-founder of the campus's student birding club, went to China in 2017 for his honors thesis. It was an opportunity to pursue his love of birding and fascination with language. He grew up in a household speaking both English and French, and he enjoyed the complexities of language. In sixth grade, he took a mandatory class in Mandarin Chinese and was so delighted to learn Chinese language codes that he continued to study the language.

Commercon's passion for birding began in elementary school, too. Lacking accessibility to personal electronic devices and living in an area with abundant open space, he spent much of his time exploring the natural world. His identity and evolution as a naturalist led him from Denver Audubon's beginning birding class to leading trips for DFO. Throughout his teens, Commercon participated in numerous citizen sciences projects, from bird banding and HawkWatch to the Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas and bluebird box monitoring. Along the way, he developed the values of a bird conservationist.

He further refined those values by getting involved in other conservation issues. He wrote about habitat degradation at Chatfield State Park and studied the maintenance of healthy ecosystems in the Fort Collins area, where he is in college. Learning about rainforest deforestation, overhunting, and the bush meat trade in the world's most ecologically diverse habitats caused him to ponder the values underlying these human behaviors.

His honors thesis work centered on the rural village where he stayed for seven months in China's Xishuangbanna Prefecture, which is bordered by both Myanmar and Laos. The Dai culture is one of 13 ethnic minority groups in China (most Dai people are Buddhist). He told his DFO audience that they live in one of the country's most biodiverse areas, home to 37 percent of China's bird species.

Yet, they also live amid deforestation caused by expanding cultivation of natural latex for the auto industry. Although it has substantially changed the land, Commercon said the farmers seemed unconcerned about those changes and their effect on the environment. Overhunting has resulted in a 34 percent loss of the area's wildlife diversity. Commercon recalled that when he voiced his concern, a captive and mistreated owlet was given to him. But he

Continued on page 5

REVIEW, continued from page 4

also paid cash to save a hawk, a species hated by local people because it catches and eats their chickens. He later freed the bird, fearing serious repercussions if he had been seen releasing it.

Commercon said he tried to understand the local values by polling the people of his village. They told him they would be unhappy if the number of birds declined, because they regard birds as pretty creatures with pleasant songs. The village's hunters were passionate about nature and cared more about wildlife than did others in their community. He thought these hunters might perhaps serve as the seeds of a local conservation movement.

As he continued to research the factors that influenced the village's behavior, he focused on the consumption of meat, both wild and domestic. Commercon found that the local hunters ranked wild birds as safer to eat than chicken, cattle, or pork. Most villagers agreed, ranking free-living animals as the safest, tastiest, and most nutritional of all meat sources. The consensus seemed to be that wildlife tasted better and, of course, was free.

He also found that social influences favored hunting. Commercon spoke of a villager who had arrow-killed several large fish and, upon returning home, gave a feast for his friends. Every villager wanted to be his friend.

He also asked villages about whether they saw recreational value in wildlife. When he asked people if hunting was fun, he found that, even without likelihood at times of catching anything, people found the pursuit of prey and being out in the woods were what made the experience enjoyable – not unlike the way birding is enjoyable to birders like us.

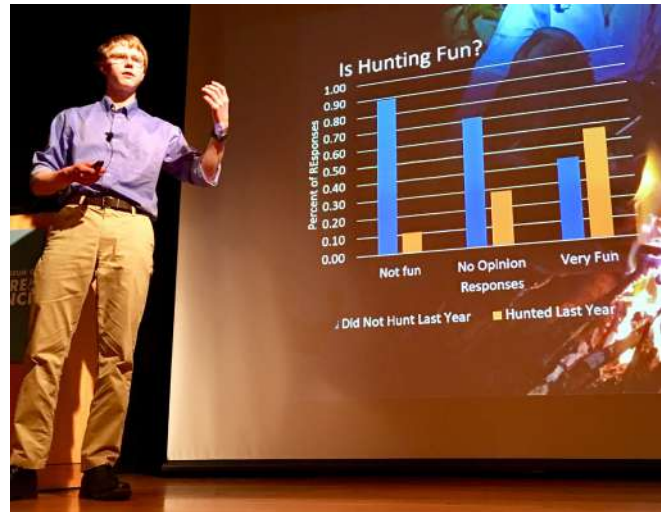
Commercon's last story was about one of the village's richest men, who was catching birds and selling them in the songbird trade. After Francis expressed his concern about one of the man's captive birds, the man drove 20 minutes away to release it. Commercon said the man obviously wanted to be his friend, and changed his behavior because of the social pressure of Francis's disapproval.

In conclusion, Francis said he found that the best way to develop pro-conservation behavior is through social pressure and social influence. Humans have a need to fit in and be a part of a social community. And, a community is needed to encourage wildlife conservation. With other village concerns, like street cleanliness, everyone helps out. They work together to improve their living conditions. The people feel pride and assume responsibility for something they own and manage. That same pride and sense of responsibility can be directed toward conservation issues.

Commercon's experience suggests communities on opposite sides of the world can be unified in their conservation values. Now, his journey continues as he completes his education and continues to explore conservation values.

[See Commercon's presentation on video at the website!](#)

Attending programs in person is the best way to enjoy the wonderful speakers that DFO gets for these monthly programs. But, if you can't make it for any reason, you will find most of our past programs over the last several years recorded on video and posted at this site.



Francis Commercon presented at the April DFO Meeting.
Photo credit: Dave Hill

Field Trips

Continued from page 4

Western Colorado

**Mon, June 25 - Thurs, June 28
6:00 AM - 6:00 PM**

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 8

Golden Gate Canyon State Park

**Wednesday, June 27
7:00 AM - 3:00 PM**

Mark Amershek

Email: mammershek@msn.com

Phone: 303-329-8646

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 11

Staunton State Park (Jefferson County)

**Saturday, June 30
6:45 AM - 2:00 PM**

Rebecca Laroche

Email: RebeccaLLaroche@gmail.com

Phone: 626-318-4435

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Maximum Participants: 8

April flight log

By David Suddjian

DFO's Big Year 2018 added 65 new species in April, bringing the total to 239 species. Our pace is 79 species (49 percent) over the average for the prior five years!

At this pace, DFO may surpass its highest ever annual total (277 species in 2017) in May.



We fielded an amazing 23 field trips in April to locations in every direction. Trips ranging far afield outside of metropolitan Denver included trips to Cortez in the Four Corners region, to Yuma County on the eastern edge of the state, and to Lamar on Colorado's southeastern Plains. DFO birders also journeyed to Cameron Pass in north central Colorado for the Boreal Owl and took trips to Chico Basin southeast of Colorado Springs, Poudre Canyon in Larimer County, and Weld County on the northern edge of state. That Weld trip ended up in Larimer County as DFO birders successfully chased an Anna's Hummingbird onto the Big Year list.

For the Big Year effort, we have coded the 502 species on the Colorado list to help in our planning:

Code 1: expected without special planning (193 total species from the state list)

Code 2: expected but some basic planning is needed (77 species)

Code 3: specialties requiring trips to particular places at the right time (69 species)

Code 4: rarities that we can't specifically plan to encounter (163 species)

By the end of April, we had already recorded 86 percent of the expected Code 1 species (165), 53 percent of the expected Code 2 species (41), 33 percent of the Code 3 specialty birds (23) and 6 percent of the Code 4 rarities (10 species). April added some target specialties, but most of the new finds were expected for the month as early spring migrants began to pass through the state.

Highlights:

- New Code 3 species added in April, in order of discovery, were Boreal Owl at Cameron Pass (Jackson County), Greater Roadrunner at Two Buttes (Baca), Snowy Plover at Upper Queens Reservoir (Kiowa), Acorn Woodpecker near Durango (La Plata), Lucy's Warbler in Yellow Jacket Canyon (Montezuma), Grace's Warbler near Dolores (Montezuma), and Black-throated Sparrow (Montezuma).
- Our new Code 4 species was Anna's Hummingbird in Fort Collins (Larimer), the result of a rapid detour after news of the bird reached an active Weld County wetlands trip already in the field.

Special mention goes to the Anna's Hummingbird, Lucy's Warbler, and Black-throated Sparrow. All three were the first in their species seen in the past decade on a DFO field trip. The Snowy Plover, Greater Roadrunner, Acorn Woodpecker, and Grace's Warbler were recorded for just the second time in DFO history. Boreal Owl and Cattle Egret were recorded for the third year in DFO history.

Getting on the Field Trips You Want

By Karen von Saltza, DFO Field Trip Director

I hear the occasional complaint that field trips fill up too quickly and that waitlists for some trips are quite long, making it hard for some people to get on. Here are some tips for improving your chances – and some things the DFO Field Trip Committee is working on to improve trip access for everyone.

Each month's upcoming field trips are posted early on the first day of the prior month. For example, on June 1, about 20 new July trips will appear on the DFO website at 7:30 a.m. If you wish to have the full selection of trips to choose from, log on early on the morning of the first day of the month.

Incidentally, that 20 trips number is a major increase over our old average of eight or so trips a month. The committee has been encouraging leaders to add more trips. At the same time, we have been building out cadre of trip leaders to handle the growing field trip load.

It's also a good idea to check the website during the month. The field trip list may change because of weather or other circumstances. Sometimes a trip is canceled; other times it is pushed out to another date. In these cases, the field trip leader notifies the participants and explains the situation. We strive to cancel as few trips as possible.

At the same time, new field trips may be added during the month, so if you want to see the most accurate and up-to-date schedule, visit the DFO website – and do so often. We continue to publish the schedule in *The Lark Bunting* each month, but any changes after the newsletter is published will only appear on the website.

As you know, sometimes the number of participants on a trip is limited. DFO trip leaders are allowed to cap their trip size. Many leaders and participants enjoy birding in smaller groups. If a trip you want is full, you can still register for the trip – and being on the waiting list is not necessarily the dead end some people assume it will be.

The fact is, waitlists seem to have a way of clearing up. If your name is still in red on the website roster for a trip several days beforehand, don't despair. Many people decide at the last minute to cancel, and the trip list can change significantly overnight. It is still worth checking right up until the morning of the trip. It is entirely possible for your name to move up overnight.

To see where you stand, log in at the website and go to "Upcoming Trips/Register" in the dropdown "Field Trips" menu tab atop the home page. Then click on "Register" beside the name of the trip and scroll to the blue link titled "*Field Trip Participants and Waitlist*." Click this link and you will see the names of everyone registered for the trip and which ones are waitlisted (names in red).

Some trips are suited to larger groups and aren't limited. If the participant list grows long, the trip leader will usually bring in a second DFO trip leader to help manage the group. As you have probably noticed, we continue to increase the number of trip offerings each month so that even if some trips are "sold out," there will still be something for everyone.

We know that the matter of field trips filling up quickly is a particular challenge for DFO members who don't have internet access. It is true that by the time the printed edition of *The Lark Bunting* arrives in mailboxes, many of the new trips may already be filled. If you simply don't use computers, here's one alternative suggestion: ask a birding friend with computer access to the online scheduling tool to help keep you in touch.

One more suggestion: if you are unable to attend a field trip for whatever reason, please remove your name from the trip participant list as soon as you know you won't be going. It's simple: Go to the "Upcoming Field Trips" page and click the blue box on the upper left side, labeled *Show/Edit My Upcoming Trips*. Select the trip you wish to delete and do so. This removes your name from the list and makes room for the next person on the waitlist to go instead.

Welcome to new DFO members!

Dale Campau, Centennial; Kathryn Dunleavy, Denver; Wm (Mark) Eddy, Denver; William Fink, Longmont; Ben Herbek, Parker; Dana Jennings, Centennial; Sharon Kay, Greeley; Neil Krauss, Denver; Greg Mihalik, Salida; Deborah Ostergard, Lakewood; Barbara Thomas, Arvada

Thank you for your contribution to the Research, Education and Conservation Grant Fund

Dana Jennings, Deborah Ostergard



A flock of Yellow-rumped Warblers at Cherry Creek included (from top to bottom) hybrids, Audubon's, and Myrtle. Photo credit: Isaac Ho



Year 2 of DFO Waterbirds Project: New Collaboration with Bird Conservancy of the Rockies

By Pat O'Driscoll

With the arrival of spring, DFO's year-old citizen science project to monitor the big colonial waterbirds that nest in our midst is back up and running... with a helpful new twist.

DFO is collaborating this year with the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies' "Colorado Colony Watch" to pool our observations together on an easy-to-use online platform called CitSci.Org. This should increase the numbers of eyes on our subject populations of herons, egrets and cormorants in four metro Denver parks. At the same time, DFO citizen scientists who participate can help the Conservancy's continuing observations of about 120 other Front Range bird colonies when members bird at those locations.

Last year's pilot effort of the DFO Colonial Waterbirds Project yielded baseline data on which to build our long-term effort to track changes and the health of waterbird colonies along the urban Front Range. As you may recall, DFO members who birded at these high-profile locations – Denver City Park's Duck and Ferril lakes, Washington Park's Grasmere Lake, Belmar Park in Lakewood's Kountze Lake and the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt's Tabor Lake – were asked to share observations via the eBird lists they routinely filed after visiting these locations.

The process was a convenient way to deliver data, but it became difficult to extract because of eBird's note- and narrative-focused reporting format. So, this year, we are using a simpler, 1-page "colony visit form" developed with our friends at the Conservancy.

Each time we visit one of our locations, we'll mark boxes on the forms with uncomplicated handwritten observations ("number of active nests," "total number of dependent birds," etc.). Then, we will enter results into a "Colorado Colony Watch" page on CitSci.Org. There is even a smartphone app that observers can use from the field once they're familiar with what data we gather and how we record it.

"I think it certainly makes it more efficient for both organizations to join forces," said Nancy Drilling of

the conservancy, who is Colony Watch manager for the project webpage. "It's more streamlined for the volunteers, and it expands the pool of people who want to participate. It's more focused, too."

A small number of DFO members who contributed observations to last year's inaugural waterbirds effort form the core of early volunteers. The next step is to recruit more DFO members to the cause.

If you are interested in joining in our second year of DFO's Colonial Waterbirds project, contact DFO project coordinator Patrick O'Driscoll by email or phone (patodrisk@gmail.com and 303-885-6955). After we send new participants an invitation and link to the CitSci.Org website, they create their own user names and passwords and register at the site. Then they can download copies of the colony visit forms as well as instruction sheets on how to use the website and how to conduct field observations.

Bird Conservancy of the Rockies' Colony Watch program has tracked colonial nesting species for more than 20 years.

Bird Conservancy of the Rockies' Colony Watch program has tracked colonial nesting species for more than 20 years. Drilling sees the future value of DFO's efforts, year after year, in tracking the ups and downs of the Double-crested cormorants, Snowy egrets and Black-crowned night-herons that nest among us.

"The main use of these data is in the cause of protecting these colonies," Drilling said. But she said the data also is useful to help public agencies, managers and even land developers understand the place of bird colonies in our communities and how to minimize harm and disruption and maximize their protection as valued local resources. "We can also put them in statewide context – the importance of a colony in the state population of that species."

Want to be a part of this meaningful work? Come join our citizen science flock! Contact DFO coordinator Patrick O'Driscoll at patodrisk@gmail.com or 303-885-6955.

DFO Yellow Jacket Canyon Trip



Gregg Goodrich, Jeff Dawson, Walt Combs, Kay Combs, and Ann Troth visited Yellow Jacket Canyon.

Photo credit: Gregg Goodrich

By Gregg Goodrich

Five determined DFO participants descended into Yellow Jacket Canyon in Colorado's quarter of the Four Corners on April 28 in search of Lucy's Warbler, the Southwestern rarity that only visits Colorado in this remote and rugged place.

The canyon lies inside Canyon of the Ancients National Monument, 400 miles from Denver and about 20 miles west of Cortez, CO. It is difficult, if not impossible to bird in a hotspot any farther from Denver and still be inside the state. Plus, this canyon lies 4 miles down a rough 4-wheel-drive road.

After 3 miles, the road became too rocky even for our 4WD vehicle, so we hiked the last mile. Walking primarily through junipers yielded a Gray Flycatcher, a target bird for us and life bird for some in our group. The canyon creek supports a nice stand of cottonwood trees where we found a Plumbeous Vireo, several Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Bushtits, Green-tailed Towhees, an Orange-crowned Warbler, and five Ash-throated Flycatchers.

Finally reaching to about the middle of the canyon, we found three Lucy's Warblers high in the completely leafed-out cottonwoods. Spring in Yellow Jacket Canyon is much further along than in Denver.

After we emerged from the canyon and got back onto Road G, we stopped at the old Ismay Trading Post, about a mile from the Utah border. There were found Black-chinned Hummingbirds at a feeder thanks to the residents of the old tradition post. There was also a Black-throated Sparrow in the brush.

After celebrating our rare-bird victory with frozen treats at the Dairy Queen in Cortez, we proceeded to a nice stand of ponderosa pines in San Juan National Forest just north of Dolores, CO. There we found our other target bird, the Grace's Warbler. We got a nice recording of its song, too.

Other bird sightings included Acorn Woodpeckers at a known spot outside of Durango and a Virginia's Warbler at another location. Our 400-mile journey added about a dozen species to our DFO Big Year total. Click on the link below to see our trip lists, which include some photos and recordings. Below is a link to look at the trip lists that include some photos and recordings. Select the Cortez trip and below you will see the eBird ID numbers that link to each of the lists.

<https://dfobirds.org/FieldTrips/PastTrips.aspx>



May 1 Big Year field trip to Crowley County:
Yellow-headed Blackbirds (top left), Savannah
Sparrow (top right), and Horned Lark with
young (bottom).

Photo credit: Diane Roberts



Volunteer for DFO: Give away money! Be a social media maven!

By Susan Blansett

Are you organized, passionate about birds and birding, and wondering how to get involved in DFO? We might have a volunteer job for you. Check out these two opportunities.

Grants Fund Chair: Want to give away money to benefit birds and their habitats? We are looking for a new chair for the DFO Research, Education & Conservation Grants Fund. The chair for this committee collects and reviews grant proposals and recommends deserving grants to the DFO Board of Directors for our club to support. The entire grants fund committee process takes about six weeks out of each year in January and February – a limited time commitment and tremendously important role in fulfilling the DFO mission: “To promote interest in the study and preservation of birds and their habitats.”

Social Media Coordinator: Are you a tech savvy birder who believes in the power of social media? Are you active on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and other social media platforms? DFO is looking for a Social Media Coordinator to help us expand our visibility and presence in the blogosphere and the Twitterverse. In this role, you will be a member of the DFO Communication and Outreach Committee, developing strategies to use the great pictures and great stories of our members to promote DFO to an expanded audience.

Interested and ready to chat? Contact Susan Blansett, Chair of the DFO Nominating Committee, at susanblansett@gmail.com with more questions and to indicate your interest.

Field Trip Scheduler: We are looking for a person to serve as field trip scheduler for the month of January only. This is a great position if field trips are your main interest. We will provide all the training. Contact Karen von Saltza via email at kvonsaltza@yahoo.com or by phone at 303-941-4881.

New officers, board directors elected at DFO’s annual meeting

By Susan Blansett

By voice vote at DFO’s annual meeting on April 16, members elected the following officers to one-year terms:

- President – Chuck Hundertmark
- Vice President – Dave Hill
- Secretary – Debbie James
- Treasurer – Sue Summers
- Membership Chair – Mary Cay Burger

Members also re-elected one incumbent and two new board members to three-year terms (expiring in 2021):

- Will Burt (incumbent, 2021)
- Karen Drozda (2021)
- Patrick O’Driscoll (2021)

The rest of the members of DFO’s Board of Directors, and their expiration dates, are:

- Tom Behnfield (2019)
- Susan Blansett (2019)
- Joe Roller (2019)
- Kristine Haglund (2020)
- Ira Sanders (2020)
- Sharon Tinianow (2020)
- Bill Turner (2020)
- Karen von Saltza (2020)

From the DFO Archives

By Joe Roller

DFO minutes from 1950:

- It was announced that the Trumpeter Swan has increased from 35 individuals in 1933 to 400 in 1949.
- The Christmas Census trip has been changed from Barr Lake to Marston Lake, Red Rocks, and an area within a fifteen-mile circle of Denver.
- Mr. Lang Bailly said that the Ivory-billed Woodpecker has been found nesting in Florida.
- The treasurer reported a balance of \$55.74 in the treasury.

Denver Field Ornithologists

OFFICERS

President	Chuck Hundertmark	chundertmark8@gmail.com
Vice President	Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net
Treasurer	Sue Summers	summerssue@hotmail.com
Secretary	Debbie James	paradox002@aol.com
Membership Chair	Mary Cay Burger	mcburger3@juno.com
Past President	Joe Roller	jroller9@gmail.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tom Behnfield (2019)	behnfield@q.com
Susan Blansett (2019)	susanblansett@gmail.com
Will Burt (2018)	willburt43@gmail.com
Karen Drozda (2018)	drozforte@aol.com
Pat O'Driscoll (2018)	patodrisk@gmail.com
Kristine Haglund (2020)	kahaglund1@aol.com
Candice Johnson (2018)	candice.johnson@childrenscolorado.org
Kay Niyo (2019)	kay@kayniyo.com
Karen von Saltza (2020)	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Ira Sanders (2020)	zroadrunner14@gmail.com
Sharon Tinianow (2020)	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Bill Turner (2020)	toursbyturner@aol.com

HISTORIAN

Kristine Haglund	303-906-8044	kahaglund1@aol.com
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FIELD TRIP SCHEDULERS

January	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
February	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
March	Bill Wuerthele	303-333-2519
April	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
May	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
June	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
July	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
August	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
September	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
October	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
November	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
December	Jill Boice	303-863-7580

DFO logo by Radeaux

COMMITTEE DIRECTORS

Field Trips	Karen von Saltza	kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Grants	Candice Johnson	candice.johnson@childrenscolorado.org
Nominating	Susan Blansett	susanblansett@gmail.com
Communication and Outreach	Sharon Tinianow	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Knowledge and Learning	Karen Drozda	drozforte@aol.com
Editor	Sharon Tinianow	sharontinianow@gmail.com
Photo Editor	Jim Esten	jcesten@gmail.com
Layout and Design	Jennifer Dillon	jnnfrdlIn@gmail.com

THE LARK BUNTING

WEBSITE AND EMAIL

Will Burt, Jim Esten, Kay Nico	admin@dfobirds.org
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LINKS AND CONTACTS

DFO Facebook	Photos and discussion	facebook.com/groups/dfobirds
COBirds	Internet bird-sighting discussion list	cobirds@googlegroups.com
DMNS Liaison	Jeff Stephenson	jstephenson@dmns.org
Tuesday Birders	Mary Keithler	mkeithler@yahoo.com
	Backup contact, Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net

DFO MEETING LOCATION

Meetings are held each month except May, June, July, and December at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science and are open to the public. Exact dates, speaker information, and cancellations will be posted on the DFO website (<http://dfobirds.org>).

The Lark Bunting

DFO publishes The Lark Bunting monthly. Readers are encouraged to submit original articles, book reviews, or photos for publication. Please submit articles by the 1st of the month to Sharon Tinianow, editor, at sharontinianow@gmail.com. Please submit photos of birds or of bird outings as image files to Jim Esten, photo editor, at jcesten@gmail.com. Credit will be given to authors and photographers. The editors reserve the right to select suitable articles and photos for publication and to edit any selected materials.

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Upcoming Speakers

The Denver Field Ornithologists monthly meetings are held in Ricketson Auditorium at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science in City Park.

These meetings are free and open to the public and occur from 7 to 8:30 p.m. on Mondays of each month August through April (except December).

Check below for the dates. Park on the north side of the Museum and enter in the north side security/employee entrance and tell the guard that you are there for the DFO meeting.

Occasionally, a meeting may be moved to a different location in the museum. These changes are announced in *The Lark Bunting* and posted on the website.

(Speakers TBA)

August 6 October 1
September 4 November 5

Denver Field Ornithologists Membership Application

Join online at <http://dfobirds.org>, or by mail.

DFO memberships expire Dec. 31; valid for the next year if paid after Oct. 1.

DFO provides grants to individuals or organizations whose mission includes ornithological research, education, and conservation.

DFO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

- ☐ Annual family membership (electronic *The Lark Bunting*) \$ 25
☐ Student membership (age ≤ 26) \$ 10
☐ Research, Education, & Conservation Grant Fund donation \$ _____

Total \$ _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____

Email (legible) _____

(Must include for electronic *The Lark Bunting*)

Check payable to DFO and send to:

Sue Summers, 2364 W Costilla Ave, Littleton, CO 80120-3502

The Lark Bunting
Denver Field Ornithologists
10826 E. Maplewood Place
Englewood, CO 80111-5742



The Lark Bunting

DENVER FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS/AUGUST 2018/VOL 54 NO 8

[HTTP://DFOBIRDS.ORG](http://dfobirds.org)

August Field Trips

Register for DFO field trips on the [website](#) or contact the leader directly. Bring your own binoculars, water, snacks or lunch, and sunscreen. Dress for the weather. More detailed directions and descriptions of each trip can be found on the website. **Please be considerate and delete your reservation if you are unable to attend a trip for which you have registered.**

NOTE: DFO Big Year 2018 Rules and Regulations can be found on the [website](#).

**Mt. Falcon Park
(Jefferson County)
Wednesday, August 1
6:30 AM - 12:00 PM**

Diane Roberts
Email: Samatha576@aol.com
Phone: 720-278-9025
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 7

Directions: Meet at upper parking lot of west side of Mount Falcon Park. We will explore ponderosa pine woodlands for the end of the nesting season at this beautiful Jefferson County Open Space.

**Ken Caryl Valley Area
Saturday, August 4
6:30 PM - 9:30 PM**

David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 10

Continued on page 2

Monthly meetings: August, September



Brad A. Andres, Ph.D

DFO monthly programs take place at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, Ricketson Auditorium, beginning at 7pm. Enter through the north side security/employee entrance and tell the guard you are here for the DFO meeting.

**Monday, August 6, 7:00 pm
A Flyway Approach to Shorebird Conservation
Brad A. Andres, Ph.D**

Brad Andres is the National Coordinator of the US Shorebird Conservation Plan with the US Fish and Wildlife Service. At our August program, Andres will present information on the unique life history of migratory shorebirds and the recent development of flyway-scale conservation strategies to protect them.

Shorebirds are one of the most mobile groups of animals on the planet. Many species travel from Arctic breeding areas to spend their winter on the beaches and mudflats of México, Central America and South America, where they share the environment with resident species.

Whether migrants or residents, shorebirds and the habitats they depend upon are exposed to an increasing myriad of anthropogenic threats. Although the challenges are great, they are not without solutions. Across both the Eastern and Western Hemispheres, shorebird scientists, conservationists and managers are tackling the conservation challenges across the entire annual cycle of this incredible group of birds.

Although there is no doubt that successful conservation depends upon actions initiated locally, isolated interventions will have the best chance for positively affecting populations if coordinated at a flyway scale.

**Tuesday, September 4
Travels to Africa
Jim Esten**

Jim is an accomplished wildlife photographer and the photo editor of *The Lark Bunting*. Our September program will feature Jim's photography from his recent trip to Africa.

Field Trips

Continued from page 1

Directions: Meet at the northern (main) parking lot for South Valley Park along South Valley Road just east of Valley Parkway. We will carpool to another site from there. This is an evening outing to see what we can find. Common Poorwill is expected after sunset, as well as birds of foothill scrub and grassland. We will walk 2-3 miles.

Green Mountain Falls-town and lower elevation trails

Sunday, August 5

5:15 AM - 1:00 PM

Chris Gilbert

Email: chrisgee9@gmail.com

Phone: 804-214-1508

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 9

Directions: Meet at Lowe's in Castle Rock near the outlet stores. We will meet and carpool to Green Mountain Falls. Hike will be 4-mile round trip with some elevation gain. Typical mountain birds like Steller's Jay and Evening Grosbeak are expected. Band-Tailed Pigeons are a possibility. Bring a sack lunch. This trip is on the more strenuous side of moderate.

First Creek at RM Arsenal

Sunday, August 5

6:15 AM - 11:00 AM

Patrick O'Driscoll

Email: patodrisk@gmail.com

Phone: 303-885-6955

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: From East Denver take 56th Ave east toward Pena Blvd. First Creek parking lot is just before Pena on your left

Continued on page 3

Our field trips have come a long way



From the President **Chuck Hundertmark**

In 2011, when I first became president of DFO, our bird club averaged 8-9 field trips a month for close to 100 trips a year. That may have been a lot for bird clubs in this country. Some thought that we were at the upper limit on what we could offer.

Today, I looked at the list of DFO trips for July and the total is 22. One or two of those trips may be canceled due to changing situations; on the other hand, we now routinely add a trip or two during the month. We are on course to average more than 20 trips a month for the year. Much of the impetus for this change has been

DFO's Big Year. In fact, many of the added trips are led by David Suddjian, our Big Year coordinator.

But the trend in growth of our field trip offerings predates the Big Year. As some trip leaders began limiting the number of people participating in their trips, demand for trips grew, and DFO's Field Trip Committee (FTC) responded by asking leaders to add trips. We also began recruiting new trip leaders to meet the growing demand. Our trip leaders enthusiastically took up the challenge and began adding more field trips.

Even with more field trips than before, some people missed the window to sign up for the trips they wanted. As you may have read in the last issue of *The Lark Bunting*, the FTC has been working to address that issue. We have urged trip leaders to keep some trips open without limit. We've also asked trip participants to be more thoughtful when registering for trips. We're continuing to grow our corps of trip leaders and we're making the timing of registration more transparent.

These efforts seem to be working. As of June 30, seven July field trips had no limit on the number of participants and six others still had openings, for a total of 13 trips open to more birders. Of course, that means nine July trips were already full. That is testimony to the enthusiasm birders have for DFO field trips.

With the second half of the Big Year beginning, the FTC has started to plan for next year. In November, we'll hold our annual Field Trip Leader Forum. This will be an opportunity for trip leaders to help plan for the coming year. The forum will face one big question, among others: "Do we try to maintain the same number of field trips?" We don't want to burn out trip leaders, but I have a sense that leaders are enjoying the pace. A few have been leading overnight trips that have been well received and taken us to places seldom birded on DFO field trips.

As always, the board, the FTC and our trip leaders welcome your thoughts on these topics.

Annual Picnic Raises Fun and Funding

By Chuck Hundertmark

It was great to spend a Saturday morning and afternoon in June with 60-70 DFO members at the 3rd Annual DFO Summer Picnic. Tom Behnfield once again took the lead on planning the event with help from Dave Hill, DFO's new vice president. Tom's selection of Prospect Park in the Wheatridge Greenbelt was inspired. The birding was excellent. There was a small mixed colony of waterbirds on Tabor Lake, many singing riparian birds, and a few Cedar Waxwings.

Using a gas-fired grill, chefs Will Burt, Mark Amershek, and Pat O'Driscoll made cooking the perfect brat look easy. As always, DFO members offered a wide selection of salads, side dishes, and desserts. Dieting resolutions fell by the wayside.



DFO members enjoying an Annual Picnic.

Joe Roller's inspiration three years ago to launch the annual members-only picnic has proven a great venue for members to get together and talk birds and birding in a genial environment with good food and unbeatable company.

This year, at the recommendation of the Finance Committee, DFO covered the cost of the picnic, but requested that those who enjoyed the brats or salmon burgers make a donation to the Research, Education & Conservation Grants Fund. The fund supports a variety of outstanding research and education efforts every year. The Grants Committee, chaired by Candice Johnson, has reached out widely to bring in worthy proposals. Many of the supported grants have resulted in DFO programs.

Inspired by the good food and camaraderie, picnic attendees donated \$655 to the Research, Education & Conservation Grants Fund. Thanks to all who made this event a success. If you missed the picnic and would like to make a donation, you can do so on the [DFO website](#) any time.

Field Trips

Continued from page 2

(north). Expect resident prairie grassland and cottonwood forest species along the creek, which leads to a cattail-lined pond and trees where hawks, owls and the occasional eagle hang out. Expect to walk 3-4 miles on level gravel and paved trail. "Go before you go" at the King Soopers restrooms at 49th and Tower Road.

Ken Caryl Valley Area

Monday, August 6

6:00 AM - 10:00 AM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meet at the northern (main) parking lot for South Valley Park along South Valley Road just east of Valley Parkway. We will carpool to another site from there. A short morning trip to visit 2-3 spots, including feeders which might host 4 species of hummers. Possible 2 miles of walking over mostly easy terrain, with some uphill and single track trails. Bring light hiking shoes, water and snacks.

Southeastern Colorado

Tuesday, August 7

5:00 AM - 7:00 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Maximum Participants: 9

Directions: Meet at the Safeway on Lincoln Avenue and

Continued on page 4

Field Trips

Continued from page 3

Yosemite, Lone Tree, CO. This will be a full Tuesday outing to one or a few SE counties. We will focus on migrant shorebirds and other waterbirds, and this is a good time to hope for an unusual summer dispersant.

Denver City Park

(Denver County)

Saturday, August 11

12:00 AM - 12:00 AM

Patrick O'Driscoll

Email: patodrisk@gmail.com

Phone: 303-885-6955

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet at parking strip on north side of Ferril Lake.

There will be lingering colonial waterbirds at the Duck Lake and Ferril Lake island rookeries. City Park is also home to Red-tailed and Cooper's hawks, woodpeckers, waterfowl, songbirds, corvids and, on any given day, a surprise guest or two.

Catamount Trail

(Green Mountain Trail to

Catamount Reservoir)

Saturday, August 11

5:15 AM - 1:00 PM

Chris Gilbert

Email: chrisgee9@gmail.com

Phone: 804-214-1508

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Maximum Participants: 9

Directions: Meet at Lowe's in Castle Rock near the outlet stores. We will meet and carpool to Green Mountain Falls (about one-hour drive from meeting spot). Hike will be 6-mile round trip with some elevation gain via switchbacks at the start. Bring a sack lunch.

Continued on page 7

Wait-listed for a DFO outing? Don't give up the trip!

By Patrick O'Driscoll

Much has been said and written recently about trying to sign up for popular DFO field trips that seem to fill up too quickly after they are posted.

If you miss your chance at a coveted outing or forget to remind yourself that the new list goes "live" on the DFO website on the morning of the first day each month, consider these additional strategies and reminders for getting your spot.

New trips: Because we are in the midst of our [DFO Big Year](#) challenge, new trips are sometimes added on-the-fly to the monthly lineup. They may be to chase rare or elusive species for the tally. They could be back-by-popular-demand outings where quality birding and lingering rarities are too good to pass up. Or, they may be at locations critical for seasonal or migratory bird possibilities – places where, for whatever reason, trips weren't set during normal scheduling.

Whatever the case, these ad-hoc trips cannot go without at least three days' notice (72 hours) via both the [DFO Facebook page](#) and the Colorado Birds (COBirds) listserv. This gives you the opportunity to join important or unusual extra trips. So watch our Facebook page and, if you're not already on it, join the [COBirds email listserv](#). Finally, check back every few days at the [DFO website's Upcoming Field Trips page](#), because it might change. In a word, be VIGILANT.

Scouting outings: Many, if not most DFO trip leaders try to scout their trip location a couple of days or so before the scheduled outing. If you're on the waiting list, ask about going along. If you're a trip leader, consider inviting those on your waiting list. Leaders can even accommodate overflow by turning that scouting trip into a regular trip, as long as you follow the minimum three-days'-notice rule mentioned above. Trip leaders who want this option should contact DFO Field Trip Committee chair Karen von Saltza at kvonsaltza@yahoo.com.

Trip already full? Sign up anyway: As DFO President Chuck Hundertmark noted in his column in the June-July issue of *The Lark Bunting*, "sold-out" trips often lose participants the last few days beforehand as people juggle changes in their calendars and daily lives. (That can include those waiting in line, too.) If you're on the waiting list – and even if you're well down the list – remain flexible and vigilant (that word again!). There's still a reasonable chance you'll get in.

One last reminder: please be considerate. Do you remember the old cafeteria sign that read, "TAKE all you want, but EAT all you take"? The same goes for field trips. If you sign up for a bunch of DFO outings but know you won't be able to do them all, review your calendar and set realistic plans. Drop the "maybes" and focus on the "absolutelys." And if your schedule changes or other demands arise, remove yourself from the list for that field trip as soon as possible so someone on the waiting list can have your spot.

Hungry Birds: The Photography of David

Visit the [Museum of Natural History](#) on the campus of the University of Colorado Boulder to see an exhibit of the bird photography of David Leatherman. The exhibit is located in the Biolounge and will be open through December 1, 2018.

David Leatherman is familiar to DFO members, having presented at monthly programs in the past. He writes a column, The Hungry Birds, that appears in Colorado Birds, the journal of the Colorado Field Ornithologists. Leatherman is retired from the Colorado State Forest Service where he served as the forest entomologist, studying and conducting outreach about the Mountain Pine Beetle.



Photo caption: Yellow-rumped Warbler with a meal of miller moth

Photo credit: David Leatherman

Knowing what food birds eat is critical for bird conservation efforts. Obtaining more specific data about bird food habits has been a passion of David Leatherman for many years. With high-resolution digital photography and a bit of luck, it is sometimes possible for specialists to identify insects to the species level and to capture information about the plants that sustain birds through the seasons.

Admission to the CU Boulder Museum of Natural History is always free and the museum is open seven days a week. Hours and location information can be found on their website or by calling the museum at 303-492-6892.

Welcome to new DFO members

Troy Becker, Centennial; Barbara Bens, Highlands Ranch; Michele Bloom, Centennial; Murray Brockman, Seneca; Joe Chen, Denver; Joe and Kelly Craighead, Denver; Michael Crews, Denver; Kathy DuPont, Denver; James Frazier, Englewood; Virginia Gulakowski, Centennial; Terry and Becca Hammons, Greenwood Village; Krissie Lynch, Ravenna; Julie Morton, Golden; John and Sydney Oberle, Fort Collins; Cedric Pereira, Denver; Dave Prentice, Denver; Nina Rach, Houston; Matthew Rodgers, Centennial; Judy Scheig, Littleton

Thank you for your contribution to the Research, Education & Conservation Grant Fund

Mark Amershek, Robert Beck, Troy Becker, Debbie and Tom Behnfield, Barbara Bens, Mark Peyton and Susan Blansett, Ann Bonnell, Tom and Mary Cay Burger, Will Burt, Denise Curran, Karen Drozda, Kim Dufford, Patricia Echelmeyer, Jim Esten, Alida Franco, John and Peggy Gonder, Gregg Goodrich, Carol and Fran Haas, Barbara Hoover, Marjorie Jannotta and Chuck Hundertmark, Thomas "Tim" and Candice Johnson, Beth Madden and Kathanne Lynch, Colleen Nunn, Patrick O'Driscoll, Joe Roller, Micki and Bob Shade, Danny Roohr and Betsy Shaw, Peter Stoltz, Bill Turner, Bobbi Vollmer, Ruth Murayama and David Weimer, Jeremy Winick



Left: Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Photo credit: David Leatherman



Right: Hairy Woodpecker
Photo credit: David Leatherman

Field Trips

Continued from page 4

Cherry Creek SP Wetlands Loop (Arapahoe County)

Sunday, August 12

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Karen von Saltza
& Bill Wuerthele

Email: kvonsaltza@yahoo.com

Phone: 303-941-4881

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet at the Prairie Loop lot in Cherry Creek SP. State Parks pass or day pass required. This is a half day of walking that passes through most of the important habitats found in the park over a distance of about 3 miles. Trails could be slippery or muddy. Lunch is optional. Beginning birders are welcome.

Colorado Eastern Prairie **Monday, August 13**

4:30 AM - 7:00 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meet near Bennet off I-70 at the south side of the King Sooper's parking lot. This full day trip will explore out to the eastern border of Colorado, possibly visiting counties such as Yuma, Kit Carson, Cheyenne or Lincoln. This is a great time for migrant grassland birds, early migrants, and hopefully eastern specialties and rare birds.

Continued on page 8

June Flight Log

By David Suddjian

June was a landmark month for DFO field trips. We surpassed 300 species for the first time ever (and kept right on rolling), and we enjoyed far-ranging field trips that went to new areas for the club. DFO added 24 new species in May, bringing the Big Year total to 319 species! These included many new to the club's cumulative list of species. Our pace is 91 species (40 percent) over the average for the prior five years. We passed a milestone on June 3 when we ticked 300 species. We fielded about 23 trips in June. Trips farther away from home included Grand Junction, Huerfano County, an outing northeast to Logan, Sedgwick and Phillips counties, Morgan County and finally a loop through western Colorado highlighting Eagle, Mesa, Montrose, Ouray and Gunnison counties.

Species on the list of birds recorded in Colorado were coded to help our planning:

Code 1 – expected without special planning
(193 species total from the state list)

Code 2 – expected but some basic planning is needed
(78 species total)

Code 3 – specialties requiring trips to particular places at the right time
(69 species total)

Code 4 – rarities that we can't specifically plan to encounter
(163 species total)

By the end of June, we had found 190 of the Code 1 species (98 percent), 68 of the Code 2 species (82 percent), 42 of the Code 3 species (61 percent), and 19 of the Code 4 species (12 percent). June added many target species and some rarities. Our new Code 3 species added in June were: Gunnison Sage-Grouse, Lesser Nighthawk, Black Swift, White-rumped Sandpiper, Western Screech-Owl, Great-crested Flycatcher, Bell's Vireo, Gray Vireo, Purple Martin, Hepatic Tanager, and Baltimore Oriole. Our new Code 4 species were Little Blue Heron, Tricolored Heron, and Yellow-throated Warbler.

Every one of these birds has a story. One worth noting is that of the Yellow-throated Warbler, the first bird we heard getting out of the car at 6:03 a.m. on June 12 at Mineral Palace Park in Pueblo. The bird was a stake-out, with a pair known to be present. But on our visit that morning, we observed the female carrying food, providing the first confirmed nesting evidence



Continued on page 8

FLIGHT LOG, continued from page 6

for Colorado. Go DFO! Nine species were recorded for the first year ever by DFO on a field trip in the past 10 years. See the annotated list of June additions below.

Now at the midway point through our Big Year 2018, we can look back over the wings and see what we've done. DFO has had 108 field trips in the first half of the year, averaging 18 trips per month, or an average of one trip every 2 days! We have found 24 species new to DFO field trips. We have reported birds from 44 of Colorado's 64 counties, including many that have never had a DFO field trip. We surpassed DFO's prior best on May 9 and passed 300 species on June 2. We are on track to meet our goal of 333 species, which will probably happen in August.

Then what? The second half of the year looks to add a steady stream of trips far afield, overnights, and trips to old and new places. We have lots of possibilities, both with Code 1 and 2 species, target Code 3 species, and Code 4 rarities. Come out on some field trips and be a part of it!

New species for June:

Western Screech-Owl

(June 1; first year ever)

Purple Martin

(June 2; first)

Black-throated Gray Warbler

(June 2; second)

Gambel's Quail

(June 3; first)

Gray Vireo

(June 3; first)

Bobolink

(June 3)

Little Blue Heron

(June 10; second)

Tricolored Heron

(June 10; second)

Dickcissel

(June 11; third)

Clark's Nutcracker

(June 12)

Yellow-throated Vireo

(June 12; third)

Hepatic Tanager

(June 12; first)

Hammond's Flycatcher

(June 15)

Northern Bobwhite

(June 18)

White-rumped Sandpiper

(June 18; first)

Bell's Vireo

(June 18; first)

Indigo Bunting

(June 18)

Baltimore Oriole

(June 18; second)

Great Crested Flycatcher

(June 19; fourth)

Pine Grosbeak

(June 25)

Lesser Nighthawk

(June 26; first)

Evening Grosbeak

(June 27)

Black Swift

(June 27; second)

Gunnison Sage Grouse

(June 28; first)

Field Trips

Continued from page 7

Lair o' the Bear Park

(Jefferson County)

Wednesday, August 15

6:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Diane Roberts

Email: Samatha576@aol.com

Phone: 7202789025

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 7

Directions: From Morrison (Hwy 74), go west past Idledale and a few more miles up the highway. Entrance is on the left. Watch speed through Morrison and Idledale. Lair O' Bear is a mountain riparian ecosystem consisting of willow carr and a nice variety of trees. American Dippers are usually in the stream or on the rocks. We will hike 3-4 miles with some elevation increase. We can have lunch after the hike and enjoy this gem in the Jefferson County Open Space.

Northeastern Colorado

Sat, August 18 - Sun, August 19

7:00 AM - 5:30 PM

Chuck Hundertmark

& Paul Slingsby

Email: chundertmark8@gmail.com

Phone: 303-604-0531

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Directions: Meet at the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Office in Denver, 6060 N Broadway. This is an overnight trip focusing on fall shorebird and early passerine migrants. Reserve lodging in advance at Quality Inn & Suites in Sterling, CO. Leader will send details. We'll bird Lower Latham, Loloff, and Jackson Lake on Saturday;

Continued on page 11



Top left: Western Tanager
Photo credit: Diane Roberts

Bottom left: House Wren
Photo credit: Cathy Olin

Right: Lazuli Bunting
Photo credit: Diane Roberts

eBird Tip of the Month: Add Bird Songs to Your Checklist

by Gregg Goodrich

Want to really start learning bird songs?
Want to see what a birdsong recording looks like?
Want to enrich your bird list?
Want to ID that bird before you see it?
Want to spend less time chasing down common
bird sounds and more time getting that different
or unusual one?

If you answer “yes” to any of the above, start recording bird songs and add them to your eBird bird checklists. All you need is a smartphone and a sound recording app. The built-in microphone on your smartphone does a good job picking up birdsong. I have used two apps – Voice Record Pro and Recorder Plus II – and they both work well.

Both of these apps are free, but if you choose the upgrade option, you can stop the advertisements. Both allow you to trim off unwanted beginnings and endings to your recordings. Both also give you the option to save your recordings to Google Drive, iCloud, Dropbox, or other sites in the required M4A format. Once you save them, you can go to your eBird lists and import your song recordings to your checklists.

To compare the two apps, [click here](#) to find a recent eBird checklist of mine with recording of a bird’s song. Scroll down to the listing for the Yellow-breasted Chat. You will find one recording made with the Voice Record Pro software and one made with the Recorder Plus II software. They are very similar in quality.

Voice Record Pro works with iOS only and is free with advertisements or \$6.99 with no ads. Here is how it works:

1. Select the red “REC” button on bottom left and you’ll get the “record” option screen. Now select the “Record” button for the default recording. Hit the Record button again.
2. Select the middle blue button to stop.
3. Select the right blue button to play.

4. Select “Trim & Effects” to remove unwanted parts of the recording. Scroll down to find the “Trim & Effects” option. Move the left and right squares at the top of the screen to trim.

5. Select the blue check box below to save. Select the “Save” button.

6. Select the “Upload” button on the next screen to save your recording to an external site with any of the several options listed on the screen.

7. File names are auto saved with a name of the current date. You can rename it.

Recorder Plus II works on iOS or Android. It is free with advertisements or \$2.99 with no ads. Here is how it works:

1. Select the red “REC” button to record and the square “Stop” button below to stop recording.
2. Trim your recording using the yellow marker (scissors icon). Move the scissors to cut out sections of a recording.
3. Select the “Export” button at lower right and select your external site to save the recording.
4. Select the “Add” button at the upper right to save the file.

To import your recording to an eBird checklist:

1. Bring up your eBird checklist on www.eBird.org/myebird
2. Select “Manage My Checklist” on the right of this screen.
3. Select the “View or Edit” option on the checklist you want to load the recording to.
4. In the right corner of the “Species” section, select the “Edit Species List” button.

Field Trips

Continued from page 8

Tamarack, Red Lion, Jumbo and Prewitt on Sunday. Route subject to change. Strenuous due to long drives.

Parker Jordan Centennial Open Space

Saturday, August 18

7:30 AM - 11:30 AM

Cynthia Madsen & David Hill
Email: cmadsen08@gmail.com
Phone: 303-770-6534
Trail Difficulty: Easy
Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Go south on Parker Rd/ CO 83 to E Broncos Pkwy, go through the light and turn right onto a dirt road (mile marker 64). Continue west into the Tagawa Garden Center parking lot. Follow the parking lot to the west exit. Take a short road to your left to parking lot where we will meet. This will be an easy walk of 2.6 miles over flat terrain enjoying the birds of riparian habitat along Cherry Creek.

Plainview Rd/Wondervu/ and parts of Gilpin County

Sunday, August 19

7:30 AM - 3:00 PM

Colleen Nunn & Mary Fran O'Connor
Email: cnunn6789@gmail.com Phone: 303-520-7496
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 9

Directions: Meet at CO-72 (Coal Creek Canyon Road) and Plainview Road. We will bird the Plainview Rd. area of Coal Creek Open Space to see what's out and about. Dickcissel and Grasshopper Sparrow are possibilities. When finished there, we will carpool west on CO-72 and stop at Wondervu, then go further west up to the Peak to Peak Highway and turn north.

Continued on page 12

eBIRD TIP, continued from page 10

5. Click the "Add Details" button next to the species to which you want to import the recording.
6. In the "Media" section, click the "Select" button and a window will pop up allowing you to "Browse" to your audio file on your remote site. Select your "M4A" file and it will load to your list. (You may enter comments and other details here.)
7. Click the green "Save" button on top right of your checklist and eBird will update your list with the recording.
8. Play the recording to make sure it sounds OK.

I like to view the sonogram of the bird's song as it is playing. I believe this visually reinforces the song in your mind. You can learn things about it that you may not have realized. Congratulations on recording a bird song!

A few tips on how to make a good recording:

1. Get out of the wind. It distorts and corrupts a recording. Record on a calm day or find a blind to block the wind.
2. Noise from traffic, construction, barking dogs, airplanes, and people is the next big source of interference with your recording. If you can get low in a ravine or canyon, it helps to mitigate road noise. You'll just have to wait for an airplane to fly over before you record. Avoid construction sites and any crowd noises that will corrupt your recording.
3. Hold your smartphone toward the bird and stay still and silent. You may be able to creep up on a singing bird by using foliage as a blind. Remember: You don't have to see the bird to get a good recording.
4. Try to keep your recording continuous – that is, trim off only the unneeded beginnings and endings of a recording.

FIELD TRIPS, continued from page 11

Colorado Eastern Prairie

Monday, August 20

4:30 AM - 7:00 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meet near Bennet off I-70 at the south side of the King Sooper's parking lot. This full day trip will explore out to the eastern border of Colorado, probably focusing on the NE areas of Phillips, Sedgwick, or Yuma counties. Plan for long drives and hot weather, but hopefully a nice variety of migrants, something unusual, and an eastern specialty or two. Bring lunch.

Reynolds Park and Pine Valley Ranch

(Jefferson County)

Tuesday, August 21

7:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Mark Amershek

Email: mammershek@msn.com

Phone: 303-329-8646

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Meet at Reynolds Park at 14070 S Foxton Rd, Conifer, CO 80433.

We'll bird Tuesday morning at Reynolds Open Space, then drive to Pine Valley Ranch for lunch and more birding in the afternoon. Certain parts of the trails are narrow and steep and can be difficult walking, especially at Reynolds. Total walking is about 5 miles for both locations.

Washington County

Wednesday, August 22

5:00 AM - 7:00 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Office in Denver, 6060 N Broadway. This is a full day of exploring the ins and outs of Washington County at a great time for migrant shorebirds and land birds. Prewitt Reservoir is just one major stop on a varied and interesting possible itinerary. Bring lunch. Strenuous for long day and long drives.

San Luis Valley Explorations: The Northern Valley

Thursday, August 23 - Friday, August 24

4:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Rebecca Laroche & Mark Amershek

RebeccaLaroche@gmail.com

Phone: 626-318-4435

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Stay in Salida the evening before. Leaders will notify participants of the Salida rendezvous-point. Come explore this hidden gem of South-Central Colorado. Nestled between the San Juans and the Sangre de Cristo mountain ranges, the San Luis is a mountain valley the size of Connecticut, impossible to appreciate in just one trip. This half of the adventure will be exploring the northern part, from Salida to the southern points of Saguache county.

Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR

Saturday, August 25

7:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Candice Johnson

Email: candice.johnson@childrenscolorado.org

Phone: 303-329-8131

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet at the Arsenal Visitors Center, 6550 Gateway Rd, Commerce City, CO. We hope to see shorebird migrants and many waterfowl and raptors. Be prepared to carpool because parking is limited at the lakes. Bison and deer will likely be seen. Good for beginning birders.

High Line Canal Trail: West Arapahoe County

Sunday, August 26

6:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Jared Del Rosso

Email: jared.delrosso@gmail.com

Phone: 617-275-6252

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 6

Directions: Meet near the pavilion (Shelter C) behind the Goodson Recreation Center at deKoevend park. We'll carpool to one or more locations along the High Line Canal Trail in the west Arapahoe County area (Littleton, Centennial, Greenwood Village, and/or Cherry Hills Village). Specific birding locations will be chosen on the day of the trip, depending on what's around. Plan for 3-5 miles of mostly flat walking with occasional jaunts off the trail through potentially damp fields.

Southeastern Colorado

Monday, August 27 - Tuesday, August 28

7:00 AM - 12:07 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Denver area meeting location to be announced the week before the trip. This will be two-day trip with an overnight in the Lamar area to sample a variety of great sites in the region including Otero, Crowley, Bent, Kiowa, Prowers, and Baca counties. More details will be provided in the weeks before the trip. The 7 am meeting time refers to the time we will meet up near Rocky Ford, so plan for a 5 am departure from Denver. Participants are responsible for lodging (camping is a possibility) and food.

Denver Field Ornithologists Inc
Balance Sheet
As of December 31, 2017

	Dec 31, 17
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
Denver Field Ornithologists Inc	
Endowment	2,945.17
Denver Field Ornithologists Inc - Other	27,674.42
Total Denver Field Ornithologists Inc	30,619.59
Total Checking/Savings	30,619.59
Total Current Assets	30,619.59
TOTAL ASSETS	30,619.59
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Equity	
Unrestricted Net Assets	24,284.23
Net Income	6,335.36
Total Equity	30,619.59
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	30,619.59

Denver Field Ornithologists Inc
Profit & Loss
January through December 2017

	Jan - Dec 17
Income	
Direct Public Support	
Company Matching Funds	300.00
Individual Contributions	4,140.00
Misc Donations	355.40
Total Direct Public Support	4,795.40
Other Types of Income	
Miscellaneous Revenue	4,034.39
Total Other Types of Income	4,034.39
Program Income	
Membership Dues	12,550.00
Total Program Income	12,550.00
Total Income	21,379.79
Expense	
Bank Fees	12.00
Contract Services	
Website Maintenance	500.00
Total Contract Services	500.00
Grants Distributed	6,400.00
Operations	
Layout Services	2,720.00
Printing and Copying	2,066.54
Software	14.99
Speakers Fees, Honoraria	1,200.00
Supplies	220.83
Website Hosting and Other	110.33
Total Operations	6,332.69
Other Types of Expenses	
Insurance - Liability, D and O	1,289.00
PayPal Expense	272.68
Sec'y of State annual filing	10.00
Total Other Types of Expenses	1,571.68
Travel and Meetings	
Conference, Convention, Meeting	162.00
Training	66.06
Total Travel and Meetings	228.06
Total Expense	15,044.43
Net Income	6,335.36

Denver Field Ornithologists

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Kristine Haglund	303-906-8044	kahaglund1@aol.com
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FIELD TRIP SCHEDULERS

January	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
February	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
March	Bill Wuerthele	303-333-2519
April	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
May	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
June	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
July	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
August	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
September	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
October	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
November	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
December	Jill Boice	303-863-7580

DFO logo by Radeaux

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LINKS AND CONTACTS

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COBirds	Internet bird-sighting discussion list	cobirds@googlegroups.com
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Tuesday Birders	Mary Keithler	mkeithler@yahoo.com
	Backup contact, Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net

The Lark Bunting

DFO publishes The Lark Bunting monthly. Readers are encouraged to submit original articles, book reviews, or photos for publication. Please submit articles by the 1st of the month to Sharon Tinianow, editor, at sharontinianow@gmail.com. Please submit photos of birds or of bird outings as image files to Jim Esten, photo editor, at jcesten@gmail.com. Credit will be given to authors and photographers. The editors reserve the right to select suitable articles and photos for publication and to edit any selected materials.

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Upcoming Speakers

DFO monthly meetings are held at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science and are free and open to the public. Check below for dates. Updated information about monthly meetings can be found on the [DFO website](#) and on the front page of *The Lark Bunting*.

August 6: Brad A. Andres, Ph.D
A Flyway Approach to Shorebird Conservation

September 4: Jim Esten
Travels to Africa

October 1: Seth Gallagher
Greater Sage Grouse

November 5
TBA

Denver Field Ornithologists Membership Application

Join online at <http://dfobirds.org>, or by mail.

DFO memberships expire Dec. 31; valid for the next year if paid after Oct. 1.

DFO provides grants to individuals or organizations whose mission includes ornithological research, education, and conservation.

DFO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

- | | | |
|---|----|-------|
| ☐ Annual family membership (electronic <i>The Lark Bunting</i>) | \$ | 25 |
| ☐ Student membership (age ≤ 26) | \$ | 10 |
| ☐ Research, Education, & Conservation Grant Fund donation | \$ | _____ |

Total	\$	_____
-------	----	-------

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____

Email (legible) _____

(Must include for electronic *The Lark Bunting*)

Check payable to DFO and send to:
Sue Summers, 2364 W Costilla Ave, Littleton, CO 80120-3502

The Lark Bunting
Denver Field Ornithologists
10826 E. Maplewood Place
Englewood, CO 80111-5742



The Lark Bunting

DENVER FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS/SEPTEMBER 2018/VOL 54 NO 9

[HTTP://DFOBIRDS.ORG](http://dfobirds.org)

Field Trips

Register for DFO field trips on the [website](#) or contact the leader directly. Bring your own binoculars, water, snacks or lunch, and sunscreen. Dress for the weather. More detailed directions and descriptions of each trip can be found on the website. **Please be considerate and delete your reservation if you are unable to attend a trip for which you have registered.**

NOTE: DFO Big Year 2018 Rules and Regulations can be found on the [website](#).

Ken Caryl Valley Area Saturday, September 1 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meet at the northern (main) parking lot for South Valley Park along South Valley Road just east of Valley Parkway. We will carpool to another site from there.

An evening outing to enjoy the hogback areas on private Ken Caryl Ranch at this lovely time of day. We will be out until after sunset to encounter Common Poorwill. Plan for up to 2.5 miles of walking.

Ken Caryl Valley Area Monday, September 3 6:30 AM - 11:00 AM

Continued on page 2

Monthly Programs



Jim Esten

DFO monthly programs take place at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, Ricketson Auditorium, beginning at 7 PM. Enter through the north side security/employee entrance and tell the guard you are here for the DFO meeting.

Tuesday, September 4 Travels to Africa Jim Esten

Jim Esten, photo editor for *The Lark Bunting*, is the presenter at the September meeting of the Denver Field Ornithologists. He will share photographs from his trips to South Africa in October 2015 and Tanzania in February 2018. Most of his images are of birds, but he will include shots of other wildlife, as well.

Along with details of his excursions to Africa, Esten will share tips about the equipment he uses and how he has honed his skills as a photographer.

Esten still considers himself a beginning birder, so his presentation will include less scientific information than that of recent programs. He claims that if you try to stump him you'll probably succeed. Esten's presentation is essentially a travelogue. Plan to sit back and enjoy while getting a glimpse of birds and other wildlife from two distant parts of the planet.

Jim Esten has been serious about photography for about 17 years. He is mostly self-taught but enjoys photography workshops, especially in beautiful places. Esten became more serious about shooting images of birds when his sister bought him a National Audubon Society membership five years ago. Originally from Massachusetts, Esten has lived in Colorado for 47 years and is retired from a career in Information Technology.

Monday, October 1 Sage Grouse conservation: one conversation at a time Seth Gallagher

The Greater Sage-grouse has been in the spotlight over the last decade and the 2015 decision to not list the species under the Endangered Species Act elicited a whole range of reactions from people who care about birds, wildlife and wild places. Seth Gallagher is the Program Manager with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. He will discuss one conservation professional's journey through collaborative efforts to conserve Greater Sage-grouse in the Western United States.

Field Trips

Continued from page 1

David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659)
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meet at the northern (main) parking lot for South Valley Park along South Valley Road just east of Valley Parkway. We will carpool to another site from there.

A short holiday outing to visit a few areas at private Ken Caryl Ranch in search of migrants and other fun birds. Plan for up to 2-3 miles of mostly easy terrain, with some uphill and single track trails maybe.

Boulder County Tuesday, September 4 6:30 AM - 1:00 PM

John Malenich & David Suddjian
Email: john.malenich@comcast.net
Phone: 303-359-9456 cell
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at the parking lot at Scott Carpenter Park, 1505 30th St., Boulder.

We will visit a few locations in Boulder, and possibly Lyons, targeting Fall migrants. Possible locations include CU East Campus/Boulder Creek and Skunk Creek confluence, Old St Vrain Road in Lyons, Green Mountain Cemetery, Walden Ponds, and Lagerman Reservoir. Plan for a few miles of walking on level trails.

Continued on page 3

Construction alters 2019 DFO meeting plans



From the President Chuck Hundertmark

On July 19, DFO Vice President David Hill and I learned that a construction project at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science (DMNS) means that the space where DFO monthly meetings are held will not be available in 2019.

Museum Vice-President and Chief Curator Gabriela Chavarria, Ph.D., conveyed the news to us when we met with her to discuss the 2019 meeting schedule. Dr. Chavarria, who leads the Research and Collections Division at DMNS, also

shared her commitment to providing DFO a regular meeting place at the museum in 2020.

During the first half of 2019, the museum plans to renovate the Space Odyssey exhibit and other nearby areas, including the space above the Ricketson Auditorium, where we normally meet. After that work, the museum will make improvements to Ricketson and the planetarium to make them more accessible.

Dr. Chavarria began her career as an entomologist and completed her doctorate at Harvard University, where she studied under E. O. Wilson. She recounted her own leadership roles with entomological societies, expressing her recognition of the importance of having a reliable meeting place and schedule.

She assured Dave and me that she and the museum value the relationship with DFO and the museum's other associate groups. She plans to work with museum staff to develop meeting schedules for 2020 that all of our clubs can rely on.

For the interim, the DFO Board is working to find a suitable location for our 2019 meetings. The excellent audio-visual support we receive at the museum, as well as the ample parking and substantial seating capacity, have resulted in high expectations. We hope we can meet those expectations for our 2019 meetings.

DFO meetings through the rest of this calendar year will remain at DMNS on the previously published schedule. By the end of September, we hope to announce the 2019 meeting dates and location. After an encouraging meeting with Dr. Chavarria, we look forward to continuation of the strong bond DFO has had with DMNS since the club was founded in 1935.

Field Trip Report:

Western Colorado, June 25-28

By John Malenich

In a year when DFO has vastly expanded the scope and range of its field trip offerings through its Big Year project, one of the most ambitious, extensive, and far-flung trips was the four-day June 2018 trip to western Colorado. Led by our Big Year guru David Suddjian, nine intrepid DFO birders beat the bushes in some of the least-traveled and most-scenic areas of the far western reaches of the state.

Day One began in the high country of Eagle County, including Vail and Shrine passes, where we added a Pine Grosbeak to the Big Year list. We then descended to Grand Junction for an evening encounter with a recently-fledged Western Screech-Owlet thanks to David's planning and some help from local expert Mike Henwood.

Gray Vireos at Colorado National Monument kicked off Day Two before the hardy travelers ventured into the remote solitude and beauty of the Uncompahgre Plateau and Unaweep Canyon. Uncompahgre – the Ute word for “dirty” or “red water” – was reflected heavily in the red and orange hues of the landscape. Unaweep Canyon is geologically-unique with two creeks flowing in opposite directions from either end of the canyon.

A highlight of the trip for many was our stop at Thimble Point on the Divide Road. We marveled at David's bird-whispering skills with a spot-on imitation of a Pygmy Owl that turned a quiet ponderosa forest into a cacophony of alarm calls from chickadees, nuthatches, tanagers, and several enchanting Grace's Warblers, including one that nearly landed on David's head searching for that elusive owl to deliver a good hazing.

Day Two continued as our throng birded its way up Divide Road before setting up camp at the Columbine Campground near Columbine Pass. After a hearty and cheerful potluck dinner, the birding mania continued with a trip down the mountain into Nucla and its sewage lagoons. Local experts Coen Dexter and Brenda Wright shared their intimate knowledge of the area and the often-sought-after Lesser Nighthawk. As twilight settled in, luck clearly shined upon DFO birders. Within minutes, Coen directed us straight to a Lesser Nighthawk feeding over the lagoons. Spotting it was easier because the only birds circling the lagoons then were a handful of Common Nighthawk. Coen and Brenda's encyclopedic knowledge of the target bird's behavior and field marks, as well as the lagoons' various landmarks, made it all happen.

Morning birding on Day Three in the high-elevation area around the Columbine Campground yielded Red-naped Sapsuckers, Red Crossbills, and more before we descended back to Nucla and then Naturita and the picturesque canyon of the San Miguel River. Still later, Black Swifts were

Continued on page 4

Field Trips

Continued from page 2

Cherry Creek State Park (Arapahoe County)

Friday, September 7

6:30 AM - 3:00 PM

Cynthia Madsen

Email: cmadsen08@gmail.com

Phone: 303-770-6534

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet at the West Marina parking lot. State Parks pass or day pass required.

This is a Fall Count field trip. Explore areas within the park designated by leader.

Barr Lake State Park Saturday, September 8

6:00 AM - 3:00 PM

David Hill

Email: d_d_hill@comcast.net

Phone: 303-870-4316

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet at parking lot at the south end of Lark Bunting Lane. State Parks pass or day pass required.

This is a Fall Count field trip. Jamie Simo and Dave Hill will co-lead this trip to areas within the park designated by the leaders.

Audubon Nature Center Saturday, September 8

6:15 AM - 3:00 PM

Karen Drozda

Email: drozforte@AOL.com

Phone: 303-388-0891

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet at the Audubon Nature Center parking lot. From C-470 drive south on Wadsworth Blvd 4.2 mi. Turn left onto Waterton Rd. Drive

Continued on page 4

Field Trips

Continued from page 3

0.1 mi and turn left into the Audubon Center.

This is a Fall Count field trip. Urling Kingery and Karen Drozda are leading this fall count trip on downstream trails for a distance of 4-5 miles. Wear long pants (not shorts) due to bare-leg unfriendly plants such as poison ivy, thistles and knapweed.

Lower Bear Creek Saturday, September 8 6:30 AM - 3:00 PM

Mark Amershek
Email: mamershek@msn.com
Phone: 303-329-8646
Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meeting place at parking lot east of Conoco/ Circle K gas station. Exit C-470 onto Morrison Road. Drive west 0.1 miles and turn right onto Rooney Road. Turn right into parking lot across from the Conoco Station.

This is Fall Count field trip. Co-leaders are Keith Hidalgo, Rick Creswell and Mark Amershek. This trip will include areas inside and outside Bear Creek Lake Park as designated by leaders. City of Lakewood fee required to access Bear Creek Lake Park.

Chatfield State Park Saturday, September 8 6:30 AM - 3:00 PM

Joey Kellner
Email: vireo1@comcast.net
Phone: 303-978-1748
Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet at the west entrance station, 1.0 miles

Continued on page 5

FIELD TRIP REPORT, continued from page 3

our next target. With daylight waning, our roving band was rescued from the grips of swift-squelching delay by the serendipity of a kind and dapper Norwood rancher with a timely tow.

Taking flight over the grandness of Dallas Divide with the panoramic skyline of the Sneffels Range before us, our DFO flock carried on to Ouray's renowned Box Canyon Falls Park for a hoped-for interlude with the elusive swifts. An intimate encounter with a cooperative Evening Grosbeak at the feeder at the entrance to the park was an appetizer to the main course: Black Swifts darting up and down the narrow canyon. We saw several egg-filled nests, including one of the swifts incubating an egg in hers. Thus ended another day of lifers for many and some more Big Year birds for DFO.

The grand finale of our epic sojourn would be a true Colorado specialty – the endangered, scarce, and stealthy Gunnison Sage-Grouse. Bleary of eyes and sore of feet, our band of still enthusiastic and vigorous voyagers dove into the sagebrush habitat south of Blue Mesa Reservoir in search of our quarry. We scanned the slopes stop after stop after stop (after stop). Eventually found, and photographed, our prize in a fleeting encounter.

With that key goal met, we continued to explore Gunnison and Hinsdale counties before laying the field trip to rest in the Gunnison Cemetery. The eulogy and epitaph? Four days, eight counties, 115 species, five new Big Year birds (Pine Grosbeak, Lesser Nighthawk, Evening Grosbeak, Black Swift, and Gunnison Sage-Grouse) – and countless smiles, laughs, and memories, thanks to a herculean feat of planning and logistics by our Big Year leader.

Welcome to new DFO members

Welcome new DFO members: Bryan and Kristin Arnold, Littleton; Bez Bezuidenhout, Lakewood; Sandra Hansen, Fort Collins; Judith Henderson, Denver; Ken Wat, Centennial; Gail Yanowitch, Stowe

Thank you for your contribution to the Research, Conservation, and Education Grants Fund: Sandra Hansen

eBird Tip of the Month: Sharing checklists

By Gregg Goodrich

One of the big benefits of eBird is sharing your birding checklist with friends on a field trip. When birding as a group, only one person has to keep the list. Then that person can share the list with all members in the group. You can share an eBird bird list using either the members' email addresses or eBird usernames of your friends.

Ask your friends to share their eBird usernames with you, because there are advantages to using them. Doing this allows the shared list to go directly into each friend's eBird account. Your friends will not have to enter the link from the email. Plus, with the eBird username entry you can check the "friends" box to have all shared lists from this friend automatically accepted. Be aware, though, that if a friend uses his or her email address as the eBird username, this feature will not work.

From your "My eBird" main menu on eBird.org, go to the bottom right of the screen. Select the "Manage My Contacts" link to see your current contacts and add new ones. When you share an eBird checklist, eBird will automatically update your contact list with that user. The contact list shows all eBird usernames first followed by email addresses in alphabetical order. You can move someone to the top of the list by putting an asterisk * at the beginning of the alias name. You may have to log out and log back in for this change to take effect. Click the "Alias" column to sort by this column. Check the friend's box if you want to automatically accept all checklists from this user.

To share a checklist, go to the "Manage My Checklists" menu on the right column of the "My eBird" menu. Click on the "Share" link to the right of the list you want to share. Then, select the user from the "Contacts" list below and click the green "Share Checklist" button. All done.

You can also click the "View and edit" list to the right of an edited checklist in the "Manage My Checklists" screen. From the edited list you can select the "Share w/ others in your party" link in the right hand column. You will now be at the same "share a checklist screen" you were at from the above directions.

Shared lists are a great way to recap a fun birding field trip with friends. All photos and audio from all members of a shared list will be visible to all shared list participants in the field trip. So, start sharing your lists with your birding party and share the fun.

Field Trips

Continued from page 4

south of C-470. Turn into park, drive 0.25 miles to station.

This is a Fall Count field trip. We will explore areas in the park designated by the leader, Joey Kellner.

Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR Sunday, September 9 6:15 AM - 3:00 PM

David Hill

Email: d_d_hill@comcast.net

Phone: 303-870-4316

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet at the Arsenal Visitors Center, 6550 Gateway Rd, Commerce City, CO.

This is a Fall Count field trip. Urling Kingery and Dave Hill will co-lead this trip to designated areas within the Rocky Mountain Arsenal. Space is limited so please contact leader to confirm.

Castlewood Canyon State Park (Douglas County)

Sunday, September 9

6:30 AM - 3:00 PM

Karen Drozda

Email: drozforte@AOL.com

Phone: 303-388-0891

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet at old entrance on CO 86, which is 0.5 miles west of Franktown. Turn south on Castlewood Canyon Road and go 2 miles south to the park entrance. State Parks pass or day pass required.

This is a Fall Count field trip. Tom Halverstadt and Karen Drozda will co-lead this trip to designated areas within the park.

Continued on page 6

Field Trips

Continued from page 5

**Northwestern Colorado
Tuesday, September 11 -
Wednesday, September 12
7:00 AM - 2:00 PM**

David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 10

*Directions: Meeting location
off I-70 on west slope to be
announced before the trip.*

*This overnight trip will explore
northwestern counties
including Routt, Moffat, and
more, seeking Fall migrants
and two target birds: Greater
Sage-Grouse and Sharp-tailed
Grouse. Overnight at Craig.
More details to be provided
by leader. Participants are
responsible for food
and lodging.*

**Bluff Lake Nature Center
Thursday, September 13
7:00 AM - 2:00 PM**

Rebecca Laroche
RebeccaLLaroche@gmail.com
Phone: 626-318-4435
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 10

*Directions: From I-70 East, go
south on Havana Street and
left onto E 29th Dr., which then
joins Martin Luther King Jr Blvd.
Continue on Martin Luther King
Jr Blvd to Bluff Lake Nature
Center on left side.*

*Bluff Lake offers a great range
of habitat, attracting a variety of
raptors and songbirds. Portable
toilets are on site. Paths are
easy walking trails. We'll be
walking 1-1.5 miles. Scopes are
optional.*

Continued on page 8

August program review

By Patrick O'Driscoll

In shorebird migration, timing is everything.

Blink and you might miss that Black-bellied Plover at the refuge. Stay home on a May weekend and risk not seeing the rare Hudsonian Godwit out at the reservoir. Tell yourself "next year" for a September trip to the southeast corner of the state – and maybe you miss the biggest staging of Long-billed Curlews for the flight south that anyone alive can remember.



So, when the national coordinator of the [U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan](#) says August is the month "when things really get started for shorebirds in Colorado," you might want to put down whatever you're doing and pay attention.

[Brad Andres](#) is that guy, and the timing couldn't have been better for his talk on Aug. 6 at DFO's first monthly program meeting of the fall migration season. "It's the shorebirds' peak," Andres told his audience of several dozen DFO members and guests. "You really have the next month and a half to get out and see some decent shorebirds to the east of us." He would know, with his own global life list at 2,368 bird species.

From there, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Colorado-based shorebird guru launched into a rapid-fire presentation of species data, shorebird lore, feats of migration, population threats, troubling conservation trends, and plenty of slides. Here are some highlights:

- **Species:** Shorebirds are diverse globally, with 240 species in 16 different families, from stilts and oystercatchers to sandpipers and plovers. The Americas get more than a fair share: 82 species, and 52 of them in the U.S. and Canada. "Shorebirds use the entire hemisphere – all of the Americas and beyond," Andres said. Forty-two of those species are on the Colorado list, with 25 active migrants through the state and a dozen breeding here. Andres' numbers showed Baird's Sandpiper and Killdeer each accounts for about one-third of the breeders. Shorebird numbers worldwide are relatively small, however, and some species trace unstable, downward trend lines on Andres' fever charts. He noted that of 74 distinct shorebird populations in North America, only 11 percent number 1 million birds or more, and about one-third count 25,000 birds or fewer.
- **Shorebird lore:** Andres gave a familiar nod to [B95](#), the famed Red Knot dubbed "Moonbird" for having migrated more than 396,000 miles in 22 years of life (equal to flying to the moon and halfway back) between the Canadian Arctic and Tierra del Fuego (with a spring-break

stop at the Delaware Bay). Unexpected, though, was his introduction of the [Snowy Sheathbill](#), a chunky, heavy-billed shorebird that looks not like a willow stilt or avocet but like a fat, clumsy pigeon. The sheathbill's scavenger diet includes penguin chicks, seal placentas and fresh . . . umm, did he just say "feces"? "Take THAT home and share with your grandkids!" Andres wisecracked to audience laughter.

- **Migration feats:** With 71 percent of shorebirds breeding at high latitudes near and in the Arctic, "they are one of the most highly migratory groups of animals on the planet," Andres noted. Among the longest, the Red Knot's 9,000-mile sandpiper journey each way is major-league. But for epic overwater exploits, Andres gave big props to the [Bristle-thighed Curlew](#), which makes long hop-scotches from northern Alaska to Hawaii and then to Tahiti and other Polynesian atolls for the winter. Champion nonstop honors, however, go to the [Bar-tailed Godwit](#)'s winter escape from western Alaska south to New Zealand. A slide Andres flashed on the screen told the astonishing tale: "7,270 miles – 8 days – 38 mph" . . . yes, without stopping.

- **Population threats:** With climate change, sea level rise and development both coastal and inland, ecosystem stress is apparent across the globe. "Open grasslands, the most modified system globally, have gotten hammered" by development, Andres said. This dilemma is his opening to work in his specialty: a flyway approach to shorebird conservation. He said what's needed everywhere to gain support for this work (both from political partners and financial donors) are action and infrastructure improvement based on solid biology and increased public awareness. Especially important, he added, is communicating the connection and linkage of the birds' plight with human well-being – the reality that we and the shorebirds are in this together when grasslands disappear and coastal habitat is inundated as temperatures rise.



Brad Andres

- **Conservation trends:** Andres works with an alphabet soup of shorebird partnerships and initiatives not only in the Americas but in Asia, Africa and Europe – everywhere these remarkable birds fly. One alliance, the [Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network](#), advocates for conservation in 16 countries at 104 sites from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego. Another effort is the [Pacific Americas Shorebird Conservation Strategy](#), an 80-page blueprint co-edited by Andres for 21 target species of plovers, oystercatchers, curlews, godwits – and one reverse-migrating South American bird, the Rufous-chested Dotterel, that goes north for the Southern Hemisphere winter. In most cases, they work to curb habitat loss to human disturbance and development.

Near the end of his 1-1/2-hour presentation, Andres delved into the uncomfortable reality of shorebird hunting for "bush meat" in parts of the Caribbean and the Guianas of northeastern South America (Guyana, French Guiana, Suriname). Whether for food, supplemental income or small-town markets, both legal and illegal "harvests" are not well understood but no doubt put negative pressure on bird populations. Andres expressed hope that hunting may be waning in some countries as older people abandon the practice and tighter controls and enforcement arise where hunting was once wide open and unrestricted by season, bag limit or protected species.

He noted a probable "harvest effect" there on Lesser Yellowlegs and said the entire topic is "challenging." But Andres added that "when you walk into 500 years of history," negotiation, not force and pressure, will guide the way toward sustainability, if not an immediate end to the practice.

Field Trips

Continued from page 5

Boulder County Friday, September 14 6:30 AM - 4:00 PM

Karen Drozda
Email: drozforte@AOL.com
Phone: 303-388-0891
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the parking lot at Scott Carpenter Park, 1505 30th St., Boulder.

We will visit a few locations in Boulder and, possibly, Lyons targeting Fall migrants. Plan for a few miles of walking on level trails. Depending on the birding activity, we may spend the day visiting various other locations.

Prewitt and Jackson Reservoirs Saturday, September 15 5:30 AM - 6:00 PM

Mark Amershek
Email: mamershek@msn.com
Phone: 303-329-8646
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Meet at the Colorado Parks and Wildlife, 6060 N Broadway to carpool. State Parks pass and Jumbo Res/Prewitt Res access permit required—(Habitat Permit or Fishing License).

This is an all-day trip so bring lunch, plenty of water, and bug spray.

Continued on page 10

July flight log

By David Suddjian

In July, we added six new species to the Big Year count. Although that is fewer than in prior months, the result was expected in late summer as we hunted for specific birds after the peak of the nesting season. Our six additions brought the Big Year total to 325 species, just eight shy of our goal for the year! Our pace is still 91 species (390 percent) over DFO's average for the prior five years.



DFO fielded 23 trips in July. Trips ventured to the high mountains of the Front Range and Park County, including an overnight camping trip, and outings far afield went to southeastern Colorado and the eastern prairie. We coded species on the Colorado list this way to help our planning:

Code 1 – expected without special planning
(193 species total from the state list)

Code 2 – expected but some basic planning needed
(78 species total)

Code 3 – specialties requiring trips to particular places at the right time
(69 species total)

Code 4 – rarities impossible to plan specifically to encounter
(163 species total)

By the end of July we had found all 193 (100 percent) of the Code 1 species, 69 (89 percent) of the Code 2 species, 44 (64 percent) of the Code 3 species, and 19 (12 percent) of the Code 4 species.

Three new species were found in Park County: Dusky Grouse (Code 2) near Georgia Pass, Rufous Hummingbird (Code 1) near Bailey, and White-tailed Ptarmigan (Code 3) at Kite Lake. Other new species found were Calliope Hummingbird (Code 1) at Ken Caryl in Jefferson County and American Bittern (Code 3) and Black Tern (Code 1) at Neegronda Reservoir in Kiowa County.

DFO Membership Tops 500

By Chuck Hundertmark (President), Mary Cay Burger (Membership Chair)

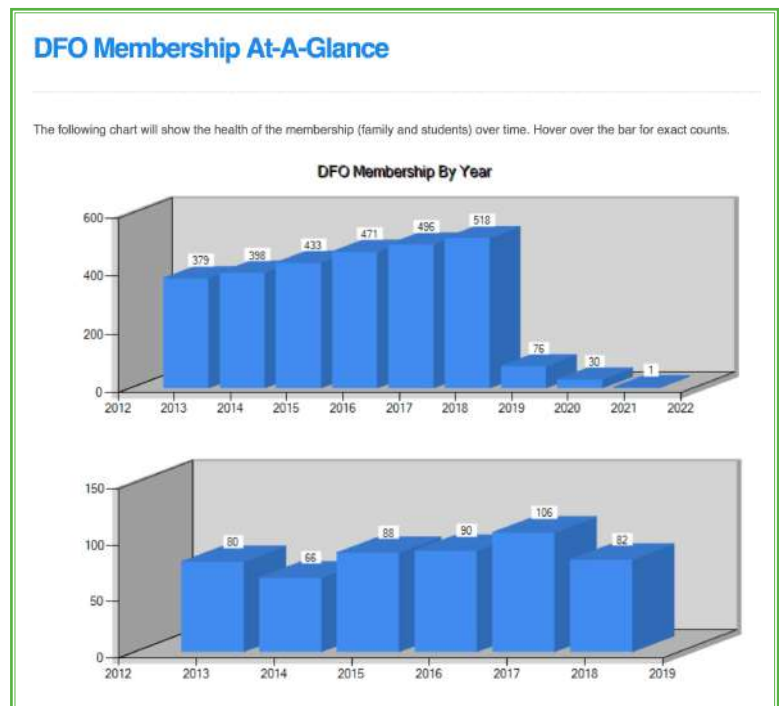
This summer membership in Denver Field Ornithologists passed 500 for the first time in the club's 83-year history. From 2013 through 2017, DFO grew at nearly 7 percent a year, an impressive growth rate when most nonprofits are struggling to maintain membership.

As the accompanying charts reflect, the web site DFO launched in 2014 allows us to track membership growth easily. It does not tell us why our membership is growing.

As with most organizations, DFO's membership growth is a function of new members joining minus current members who do not renew. For example, in 2017 there were 105 new members, far exceeding the 40 or so who did not renew. So far this year 80 new members have joined, and that number is expected to increase through the fall months.

While we don't know exactly why our membership is growing nicely, there are several things that DFO leaders are doing that likely contribute to this trend.

- **Member retention:** In most nonprofits, the member retention effort ends with a third reminder to renew. In DFO, that third reminder is followed by a personal call from Membership Chair Mary Burger. Those calls result in additional renewals primarily because some people simply forget to complete the membership renewal process. If they choose not to renew, Mary Cay's call is an opportunity for them to tell us why they are leaving DFO.
- **Member Surveys:** Through periodic member surveys, DFO reaches out to learn member interests and responds to those interests. In addition to field trips and programs, we know our members enjoy social interaction. Responding to that need, Tom Behnfield, Susan Blansett and others began an active effort to greet guests at programs to make them feel welcome.
- **Outreach:** Through Pat O'Driscoll, DFO has also reached out to the news media to let them know what the club is doing. His efforts have resulted in *Denver Post* articles about our Citizen Science and Big Year projects.
- **Website:** The DFO web site presents an attractive face to the public and leads people to *The Lark Bunting*, field trips, and our programs. We know from occasional feedback when our members travel around the country or internationally, our field trip program is gaining recognition beyond Colorado.
- **Facebook:** Many of our members who are skilled photographers are posting interesting content on the Facebook page. This enhances our visibility with other avid birders looking for an organization of like-minded people to join.



With a dynamic membership and a board committed to finding ways to continue meeting member needs, the prospect for continued growth is excellent.

Field Trips Continued...

Littleton

Saturday, September 15

7:00 AM - 12:00 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at Reynold's Landing along the South Platte. From Santa Fe south of Bowles take Brewery Lane going west and meet in the parking area at the end of the road.

We will try to visit several locations including greenbelts, urban parks, a cemetery, and the river corridor seeking migrants and whatever else. If there is a rare bird known to be nearby, we may change our plans and include a try for it. Plan on a couple miles of easy walking. Be ready to carpool to make navigation through town easier.

Boulder Reservoirs (Baseline, Valmont, and Boulder)

Sunday, September 16

6:30 AM - 4:00 PM

Karen Drozda

Email: drozforte@AOL.com

Phone: 303-388-0891

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Office, 6060 North Broadway.

Join us for an exploration of Baseline, Valmont, and Boulder reservoirs, surrounding areas and possibly the Longmont area. Our goal is to see shorebird and other Fall migrants. Plan on an all-day excursion. Scopes will be most helpful.

Southeastern Colorado

Monday, September 17 -

Wednesday, September 19

7:00 AM - 5:00 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at Fowler in Otero County at Highway 50 x Highway 167.

This will be a 3-day serious birding adventure hitting many hotspots in the southeast at a great time for migrants and rare birds. We will seek a wide variety of birds from sites in Otero, Bent, Prowers, Baca, Kiowa, and Crowley counties, and maybe Las Animas County. Plan for full days of birding, some long drives, possible hot weather, and great birds! Overnight in Lamar on Sept 17 and 18. Participants are responsible for food and lodging, and carpool arrangements will be made in advance.

Chatfield State Park:

Marina sandpit

Wednesday, September 19

7:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Gregg Goodrich

Email: GreggGoodrich@gmail.com

Phone: 303-655-9135

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 15

Directions: From the south entrance of Chatfield meet at the first parking lot which is just south east of the marina.

We will bird several locations in northwest Douglas County. Good trip to build up your Douglas County list. We will also use the Sibley app's compare feature to further study the differences between similar species.

Pueblo area

Saturday, September 22

12:00 AM - 12:00 AM

Diane Roberts

Email: Samatha576@aol.com

Phone: 720-278-9025

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 7

Directions: Meet at SW corner of the Safeway parking, 9229 E. Lincoln, Lone Tree. Park away from store.

We will visit Valco Ponds State Wildlife Area and Pueblo Reservoir. Leader will be monitoring to locate other species that will be great to see and add to the DFO Big Year numbers. Bring a scope if you have one and lunch. We will carpool from the Safeway parking lot.

Walden Ponds Wildlife Habitat/ Sawhill (Boulder County)

Saturday, September 22

7:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Chuck Hundertmark

Email: chundertmark8@gmail.com

Phone: 303-604-0531

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet at Cottonwood Marsh parking lot at Walden Ponds.

This trip will involve walking 1-3 miles on level ground. We will look at waterfowl at the lakes at Walden and Sawhill Open Space Areas, so bring a scope if you have one. We'll scope for shorebirds and look for early Fall migrants.

Park County Reservoirs

Monday, September 24

5:00 AM - 1:00 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 10

Continued on page 11

Field Trips Continued...



DFO birders on a trip to Elbert County on June 11, 2018. Credit: Diane Roberts

Directions: Meet at the Home Depot at 4277 S. Eldridge Street, Morrison.

We'll visit some of the bodies of water in South Park. We'll hope for interesting migrant waterbirds and shorebirds, maybe a loon, or who knows what. Bring a scope if you have one. Plan to carpool.

**Colorado Eastern Prairie
Tuesday, September 25 -
Wednesday, September 26
5:00 AM - 6:00 PM**

David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Strenuous
Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet near Bennet off I-70 at the south side of the King Sooper's parking lot. Take I-70 east to the Bennet Exit and go north. Turn left on West Market Place Drive and turn right into the King's Sooper's lot.

This two-day trip will focus on Cheyenne, Kit Carson, and Yuma counties seeking migrants, rare birds, and some specialties. Overnight at Burlington on Sept 25. It may be possible to join only for part of the trip (inquire with leader). Plan for long drives and full days of birding.

Participants are responsible for food and lodging.

**Fort Collins area streams and lakes
Wednesday, September 26
6:00 AM - 4:00 PM**

Paul Slingsby
Email: paslingsby@comcast.net
Phone: 720-347-5169
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the Colorado Parks and Wildlife, 6060 N Broadway to carpool.

We will visit ponds and streams in Fort Collins, including Grandview Cemetery. We will walk 2 or 3 miles. Please bring a sack lunch and snacks.

**Chatfield State Park:
Marina sandpit
Thursday, September 27
7:30 AM - 12:00 PM**

Gregg Goodrich
Email: GreggGoodrich@gmail.com
Phone: 303-655-9135
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 15

Directions: From the south entrance of Chatfield meet at the first parking

lot which is just south east of the marina.

We will bird several locations in northwest Douglas County. We will also use the Sibley's app compare feature to further study the differences between similar species.

**Chico Basin Ranch
Saturday, September 29
6:00 AM - 6:00 PM**

Mark Amershek
Email: mammershek@msn.com
Phone: 303-329-8646
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Will meet up at the King Soopers parking lot, 5544 Promenade Parkway, Castle Rock, CO 80108.

This is a fee area. We need volunteers with high clearance vehicles to drive on ranch roads. Chico Basin Ranch is a working cattle ranch located in El Paso/Pueblo counties approximately 100 miles from Castle Rock. This will be an all-day trip so bring lunch. Scopes will be handy but not necessary. A two-way radio per car would be helpful.



Top:
Common Nighthawk
Photo credit: Jim Esten



Bottom:
A Cattle Egret seen on July 29 field trip
to City Park, Denver.
Photo credit: Pat O'Driscoll

Denver Field Ornithologists

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February	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
March	Bill Wuerthele	303-333-2519
April	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
May	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
June	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
July	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
August	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
September	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
October	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
November	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
December	Jill Boice	303-863-7580

DFO logo by Radeaux

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	Backup contact, Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net

The Lark Bunting

DFO publishes The Lark Bunting monthly. Readers are encouraged to submit original articles, book reviews, or photos for publication. Please submit articles by the 1st of the month to Sharon Tinianow, editor, at sharontinianow@gmail.com. Please submit photos of birds or of bird outings as image files to Jim Esten, photo editor, at jcesten@gmail.com. Credit will be given to authors and photographers. The editors reserve the right to select suitable articles and photos for publication and to edit any selected materials.

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Upcoming Speakers

DFO monthly meetings are held at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science and are free and open to the public. Check below for dates. Updated information about monthly meetings can be found on the [DFO website](http://dfobirds.org) and on the front page of *The Lark Bunting*.

September 4: Jim Esten
Travels to Africa

October 1: Seth Gallagher
*Sage Grouse conservation:
one conversation at a time*

Denver Field Ornithologists Membership Application

Join online at <http://dfobirds.org>, or by mail.

DFO memberships expire Dec. 31; valid for the next year if paid after Oct. 1.

DFO provides grants to individuals or organizations whose mission includes ornithological research, education, and conservation.

DFO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

- ☐ Annual family membership (electronic *The Lark Bunting*) \$ 25
☐ Student membership (age ≤ 26) \$ 10
☐ Research, Education, & Conservation Grant Fund donation \$ _____

Total \$ _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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Check payable to DFO and send to:

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The Lark Bunting
Denver Field Ornithologists
10826 E. Maplewood Place
Englewood, CO 80111-5742



The Lark Bunting

DENVER FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS/OCTOBER 2018/VOL 54 NO 10

[HTTP://DFOBIRDS.ORG](http://dfobirds.org)



Seth Gallagher

Monthly Programs for the Rest of 2018

DFO monthly programs in 2018 take place in the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, Ricketson Auditorium, beginning at 7 p.m. Enter through the north side security/employee entrance and tell the guard you are there for the DFO meeting.

Monday, October 1

Sage Grouse Conservation: One Conversation at a Time

Seth Gallagher

The Greater Sage-grouse has been in the spotlight over the past decade, and the 2015 decision to not list the species under the Endangered Species Act drew a wide range of reactions from people who care about birds, wildlife and wild places.

Seth Gallagher, a program manager for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), helps manage conservation programs in the foundation's Rocky Mountain Region Office in Denver. He is passionate about grasslands conservation efforts in rural ranching communities of the West. For October's program, he will share one conservation professional's journey through collaborative efforts to conserve the Greater Sage-grouse in the western U.S.

Before going to work for NFWF, Gallagher spent 11 years managing the private lands program for Bird Conservancy of the Rockies. His work placed biologists in communities around the West to provide technical assistance, expertise and habitat restoration funding to landowners. Most recently, he worked for Pheasants Forever and the Intermountain West Joint Venture. He managed the field capacity component of the Sage Grouse Initiative, which includes 26 field positions and more than 40 funding partners across 10 states.

Gallagher holds degrees in wildlife and fisheries management from Minot State University- Bottineau and Lincoln Memorial University. He lives in Fort Collins with his wife, Christin, and son, Will. He spends his free time training pointer hunting dogs, chasing birds (both with binoculars and shotgun) and fishing.

Monday, November 5

Birding in Senegal and The Gambia – A Taste of West African Species

Bill Eden

Bill Eden will take you on a virtual 15-day trip to the countries of The Gambia and Senegal to explore the mighty Gambia River and a sampling of the birds found there. These two small Western African countries provide an opportunity to view 680 species of birds. One of most sought after species is the Egyptian Plover, known locally as the "crocodile bird." Come find out why and enjoy an evening exploring The Gambia and Senegal with Bill Eden.

Jackie King Remembered

By Chuck Hundertmark

Jackie King, long-time DFO member, field trip leader, and director, passed away on August 11.

She joined DFO in 1990 and led memorable field trips to a variety of locations, including the Nebraska Sandhills, southern Wyoming, Bonny Reservoir, and Delta, CO. She took us to Southeast Colorado to see Lesser Prairie Chickens and to Northeast Colorado to see Greater Prairie Chickens. King exhibited a youthful curiosity and shared her knowledge of birds generously.

In recent years she became dependent on a wheelchair to get around. Undaunted, she continued leading field trips to the Wheat Ridge Greenbelt, where the paved paths provided accessibility at all times of the year.

King was awarded DFO's prestigious Ptarmigan Award In 2014 for her service to the club and the Colorado birding community. Her persistence in the face of declining health and mobility is truly an inspiration. She will be remembered for her tremendous energy and enthusiasm for birding and birders, as well as her advocacy for an accessible city for all citizens.

DFO Sets 2019 Meeting Dates, New Location



From the President Chuck Hundertmark

The DFO Board has set the schedule for monthly program meetings in 2019, and they will be in a new location because of planned construction at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science (DMNS).

Meeting on Aug. 26, club officers and directors unanimously agreed to hold DFO monthly program meetings in 2019 at the Unity Spiritual Center Denver (Unity) in south-central Denver. The meetings will run from 7 to 9 p.m. on the fourth Monday of the month January through April and August through November 2019.

The location change is necessary because DMNS will be remodeling a number of spaces in its Denver City Park building in 2019, including Ricketson Auditorium (where DFO now meets), the Space Odyssey exhibit near the auditorium, the Atrium and the planetarium.

Unity is located at 3021 S. University Blvd., Denver. It is easily accessible from Interstate 25 and has excellent parking. The auditorium-style seating in the sanctuary will comfortably accommodate our expected attendance for meetings. Unity also has excellent audio-visual capability and support.

After DFO Program Chair Bill Turner introduced us to Unity, Associate Minister Tricia Morris provided a welcoming overview of the facility. DFO Historian Kris Haglund will talk with Unity's social media coordinator about recording DFO programs so they can continue to be posted to the website.

Although rental and audio-visual fees will be higher than our costs at DMNS, our budget can accommodate the expense. DFO monthly program meetings for the rest of 2018 will continue to be held in the museum's Ricketson Auditorium. We expect to be able to resume meeting at DMNS in 2020, when renovations are scheduled to be completed.

Welcome to new DFO members

Welcome new DFO members: Mary Anne Braymer, Denver; Deborah Carstensen, Littleton; Shannon Cwik, Arvada; John W Hoogerheide, Highlands Ranch; Amy Rivers, Aurora; John Whitaker, Centennial; Gabriel Wiltse, Denver.

Thank you for your contribution to the Research, Conservation, and Education Grant Fund: Mary Geder.

September Program Review

By Tim Johnson

On September 4, about 70 armchair travelers assembled to hear Jim Esten, photo editor of *The Lark Bunting*, present a slide show drawn from his travels to Africa. Esten, a longtime Colorado resident, won the trip to the Zulu Nyala Safari Game Lodge in South Africa at an auction in 2015. He traveled to Tanzania for a privately organized trip in February 2018, visiting Tarangire National Park, the Ngorongoro Crater, and Serengeti National Park.

Esten's presentation was a basic travelogue. He introduces himself on his website as "just an amateur", but his talent was evident from the pictures he shared. Since his full presentation is available at the past programs page on the DFO website, I will mention only what I thought were a few highlights.

Esten introduced the talk with some advice for would-be wildlife photographers. He uses a manual "raw data" setting rather than JPEG or other formats in order to maximize detail to work with in a finished shot. He is a fan of photography clubs, finding the critique process stimulating, if at times exasperating. Finally, he urges spending money- the bigger the lens, the better the detail. Esten carried two cameras with him, one with a 500mm lens.

A variety of animals roam the grounds of the Zulu Nyala Safari Game lodge, including ungulates and a cheetah. Notable images and sound from this site include a tree full of weaverbird nests, looking like hairy grapefruit; the Hadedu Ibis, with its famed loud call; Jackass Penguins, with the "braying" for which they are named; and Vervet Monkeys quietly watching a sunset.



Jim Esten was the presenter at the September program. His wife Karen traveled with him to Africa.

In Tarangire National Park, Tanzania, Esten encountered some excitement - an elephant having a temper tantrum. The animal's belligerence blocked the road and forced the photographers to hunker down in their vehicle and photograph through the windshield. Finally, the elephant stomped away, destroying a termite mound in the process. In addition to many birds, Esten captured a leopard stalking a warthog and a herd of Cape buffalo.

Esten spoke about the baobab trees in this landscape. They can be as tall as 100 feet in height and up to 36 feet in diameter. They can store thousands of gallons of water to carry them through times of drought. Bird images from this site included the Bateleur, a colorful, short-tailed eagle and Crowned Hornbills.

At the Ngorongoro Crater, Esten's most arresting shots were of a Grant's gazelle giving birth; the baby was walking within 15 minutes.

Images of Serengeti National Park occupied about half of Esten's presentation. His tent camp had a resident lion and he shared the lions' wildebeest breakfast complete with sound effects. Among Esten's favorite shots at this site were a rare daytime sighting of an armadillo; a White-Headed Buffalo Weaver; a Secretary Bird, which subdues prey by stomping on it; and a hyena lazing in a river. My personal favorites are the images of the strange Hamerkop; Marabou Storks, which accompany vultures to carrion; Ground Hornbill; and the Vulture Smorgasbord, which reminded me of the current Senate Judiciary Committee's Kavanaugh confirmation hearings.

I urge readers to visit Esten's web site and the recording of his full program on the DFO website. Better yet, go to Tanzania! I'll have that privilege soon and hope it measures up to Esten's portraits.

August flight log

By David Suddjian

DFO added 11 new species in August, soaring past our Big Year 2018 goal of 333 species to 336 species with four months still remaining. Our Big Year pace is 81 species over the club's average total for field trips in the prior five years. DFO fielded 21 trips in August to destinations far and wide. Local trips went across the metro area and into the adjacent foothills, while outings far afield reached southeastern Colorado twice, the eastern prairie twice, northeastern Colorado three times, and the San Luis Valley once.



To help in our Big Year planning, species on the Colorado list are coded this way:

- Code 1 – expected without special planning (193 species total from the state list)
- Code 2 – expected but some basic planning is needed (77 species total)
- Code 3 – specialties requiring trips to particular places at the right time (68 species total)
- Code 4 – rarities that we can't specifically plan to encounter (165 species total)

By the end of August, we had recorded all 193 (100 percent) of the Code 1 species, 74 (96 percent) of the Code 2 species, 45 (66 percent) of the Code 3 species, and 24 (15 percent) of the Code 4 species.

New species found in August were:

- Vermilion Flycatcher (Code 4) at Higbee Road in Otero County
- Least Tern (Code 3) at John Martin Reservoir in Bent County
- Band-tailed Pigeon (Code 2) at Green Mountain Trail in Douglas County
- Pectoral Sandpiper (Code 2) in Washington County
- Eastern Meadowlark (Code 4) at Tamarack SWA in Logan County
- Black-and-white Warbler (Code 4) at Coal Creek Open Space, Jefferson County
- Sanderling (Code 2) at Jumbo Reservoir in Sedgwick County
- Red Knot (Code 4) at Prewitt Reservoir in Washington County
- Cassin's Vireo (Code 2) at Prewitt Reservoir in Logan County
- Nashville Warbler (Code 2) at Two Buttes SWA in Baca County
- White Ibis (Code 4) at Gagby Creek in Bent County

The White Ibis in Bent County deserves special mention. Our own DFO trip discovered the bird, and the sighting is apparently only the 10th Colorado record! Reports of Vermilion Flycatcher, Least Tern, Red Knot and White Ibis were the first ever for a DFO field trip. A Nashville Warbler was found for the third year ever, and Eastern Meadowlark and Black-and-white Warbler were found for the 4th year ever.

333: Goal Met

365: Challenging New Goal

The Red Knot at Prewitt provided our 333rd species on Aug. 22, meeting the goal we had set for the entire year before the Big Year effort began. As noted, we reached the goal with four months still to come. Those include the good fall migration month of September and three year-ending months that could provide a string of rarities. We have some Colorado resident species still to encounter on a DFO trip, including Greater Sage Grouse and Sharp-tailed Grouse, but the majority of our potential finds will be uncommon to rare migrant species.

So, we need a new goal. I'd say that 350 species is too easy, as we are only 14 species shy of that as we begin September. I say 365 species is our new goal – one species for each remaining day of the year. It will be a reach, but we have a chance. Come join us for a Big Year to remember!



DFO birders on a trip to the western slope. Credit: Diane Roberts

Confessions of a Fantasy Birder

By Sharon Tinianow

Is there a birder out there who has never made a mistake in identifying a bird? Admit it now, it has happened to all of us, hasn't it? Sure, in that initial impression, fueled by haste or an over eagerness to share our find, we somehow cast caution to the wind and slap on a label that is just plain wrong. If we are lucky, this only happens when we are by ourselves or with a trusted (and forgiving) companion. But every now and then, we just can't help blurting out that cringe-worthy call to the entire birding community – or, at least, to the field trip leader and everyone else on a DFO outing.

Let's face it, the best cure for one of these flights of birding fantasy is a good sense of humor. So in that vein, we invite you to share stories of your worst calls in birding ID. We're calling this new feature in *The Lark Bunting* "Confessions of a Fantasy Birder." Please share your story – but only your OWN story. The point of "Confessions" is not to embarrass others but to share a good laugh on ourselves with our forgiving DFO community.

First up is a shorebird confessional submitted by Bob Righter, seasoned birder and co-author of *Colorado Birds: A Reference to Their Distribution and Habitat*.

While scoping for shorebirds in early fall at a local marsh just north of Saratoga, WY in the late 1980s,

I noticed something moving among the reeds near the water's edge. Zooming in, I noticed a small, dark bird pecking for insects in the mud. That was all it took for the adrenaline to start coursing through my body and for my mind to clamp instantly onto "Black Rail." The *first* sighting of a Black Rail in Wyoming, and I had found it! I swept aside any thought of caution as I contacted a state wildlife biologist, who said he would get the word out quickly to all Wyoming birders.

Sometime during the night, I felt sick in the pit of my stomach. What if my identification was wrong? At sunrise the next morning, I was back in the marsh, desperately hoping to verify. Once again, as I scanned the reeds, I noticed a small black bird walking out into the mud, looking for more insects. Just as I was thinking, "Verification!," an adult Virginia Rail walked out into the mud flat toward my Black Rail. Relief turned to humiliation and dread as I watched the bird feeding its own Virginia Rail young.

All I could think of was getting out of there as fast as I could! When I got back to the main road, coming the other way was a trio of Subarus packed with birders, undoubtedly heading for the marsh to see my "Black Rail" as I discreetly slunk away to the south.

Send your confessional tale to Sharon Tinianow, editor of *The Lark Bunting*, at sharontinianow@gmail.com.

October Field Trips

Register for DFO field trips on the [website](#) or contact the leader directly. Bring your own binoculars, water, snacks or lunch, and sunscreen. Dress for the weather. Directions and detailed descriptions of each trip can be found on the website. September field trips will appear on the website on August 1. Please be considerate and delete your reservation if you are unable to attend a trip for which you have registered. NOTE: [DFO Big Year 2018 Rules and Regulations](#) can be found on the website.

Chatfield State Park

Monday, October 1

6:45 AM - 12:00 PM

David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at the intersection of S. Wadsworth and Deer Creek Rd. Park on the north side of Deer Creek Rd. State Parks pass or day pass required.

We will explore parts of Chatfield State Park seeking a variety of species. We may include spots outside the park as time permits. Plan for 3-4 miles of mostly level walking.

Southeastern Colorado

Tuesday, October 2 -

Wednesday, October 3

5:00 AM - 7:00 PM

David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 6

Directions: Denver area meeting location to be announced the week before the trip.

This 2-day trip will begin in Otero County. We will bird our way

southeast into Las Animas County, camping overnight in Cottonwood Canyon. Day 2 will begin at Cottonwood Canyon and Carrizo Canyon and we will visit spots across Baca County and southeastern reservoirs. The camping will be primitive without facilities. Participants are responsible for all equipment, food and drink. Expect long drives, full days of birding, and possible hot weather.

Boulder County

Thursday, October 4

7:00 AM - 2:00 PM

John Malenich

Email: john.malenich@comcast.net
Phone: 303-359-9456 cell
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Meet at the northwest corner of the parking lot of the King Soopers at 1650 30th St., Boulder.

We will visit a few locations in the Boulder, Lyons, and Longmont areas, targeting fall migrants. Plan for a few miles of walking on level trails. Bring lunch. Scopes may be handy, but not necessary.

Republican Management Area and Pipit Hill

Sunday, October 7

5:00 AM - 7:00 PM

Gregg Goodrich
Email: GreggGoodrich@gmail.com
Phone: 303-655-9135
Trail Difficulty: Strenuous
Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Meet near Bennet off I-70 at the south side of the King Sooper's parking lot.

Sprague's Pipit, a rare visitor to Colorado on its fall migration, is the target bird. We will go to Pipit Hill close to Hale, Colorado, almost to the Kansas border. We will visit Republican Management Area to look for other land birds.

Elbert County

Tuesday, October 9

6:30 AM - 4:00 PM

David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meet at Bennett off I-70 at the south side of the King Soopers parking lot.

We will focus on eastern Elbert county, but may also visit adjacent areas of Arapahoe and Lincoln Counties seeking fall migrants including Chestnut-sided and McCown's Longspurs.

Rueter-Hess Reservoir (Douglas Co.)

Wednesday, October 10

7:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Tim Ryan & Diane Roberts
Email: Tryan4thebirds@yahoo.com
Phone: 720-545-5084
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at Barr CCC Park, 18964 S Twenty Mile Rd, Parker, CO.

Barr CCC Park is a Parker Water treatment pond which usually has some surprises with a marsh and Cherry Creek Trail behind it. We will also visit Rueter-Hess Reservoir. Shoreline, lake, and grassland species will be there. Plan to walk approximately 3 miles on paved, uneven trails.

Writer's Vista Park to McClellan Reservoir **Thursday, October 11** **8:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

Doris Cruze
Email: cruzeduo@aol.com
Phone: 303-798-8072
Trail Difficulty: Easy
Maximum Participants: 12

October Field Trips Continued...

Directions: Meet at Writer's Vista Park in Littleton.

Enjoy an easy hike along the canal trail. Look for songbirds and other wildlife on the trail and for waterfowl at the reservoir. We will meet at the parking lot where rest rooms are available. Bring a scope if you have one and a sack lunch if you want to lunch at the park.

Chatfield State Recreation Center Saturday, October 13 6:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Jared Del Rosso
Email: jared.delrosso@gmail.com
Phone: 617-275-6252
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 5

Directions: Chatfield State Recreation Center is located on Roxborough Park Rd, north of West Titan Rd.

Chatfield Recreation Center is located just outside of Chatfield State Park. We will walk the Highline Canal Trail southeast, passing through grassy open spaces and thin lines of riparian habitat. Be prepared for about 4.5-5 miles of mostly flat walking on gravel and dirt trails.

Chatfield State Park, The Big Sit Sunday, October 14 6:30 AM - 6:30 PM

Joey Kellner
Email: vireo1@comcast.net
Phone: 303-978-1748
Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Due to Chatfield State Park construction, access to the Heron Overlook will only be from the Roxborough Rd entrance off of Titan Road. Follow road signs to the HERONRY.

The Big Sit, an international birding event, has exacting, loose, and frivolous standards. Big Sitters count

all the birds they see or hear from within a 17-foot diameter circle. Come and join Joey Kellner and other recruits any time from before dawn to after dusk. Stay for an hour, a morning, or all day. Bring a chair and any food you might need.

Cherry Creek SP Wetlands Loop (Arapahoe County) Sunday, October 14 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Karen von Saltza
Email: kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Phone: 303-941-4881
Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet at the Prairie Loop lot in Cherry Creek SP. State Parks pass or day pass required.

This is a half day of walking that passes through most of the important habitats found in the park over a distance of about 3 miles. Trails could be slippery or muddy. Lunch is optional. Beginning birders are welcome.

South-Central Colorado Tuesday, October 16 - Wednesday, October 17 5:00 AM - 7:00 PM

David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at SW corner of Safeway parking lot at NE corner of Yosemite and Lincoln Ave in Lone Tree about 1 mile west of I-25. Park away from store.

This is a 2-day trip to Huerfano and Las Animas Counties, with an overnight in Trinidad. We will have a variety of waterbirds and landbirds as we are able to sample many locations in both counties. Participants are responsible for their own lodging at Trinidad and all meals.

Second Creek Open Space (CommerceCity / Adams County) Saturday, October 20 7:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Patrick O'Driscoll
Email: patodrisk@gmail.com
Phone: 303-885-6955
Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet at Buffalo Mesa trailhead parking off Kittredge Street.

Second Creek snakes through suburban open space north of Rocky Mountain Arsenal and west of DIA. Grasslands and creekside marshes are home to prairie songbirds, raptors and 20-plus other Plains species, plus late fall migrants heading south.

Park County Reservoirs Monday, October 22 5:30 AM - 3:00 PM

David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at the Home Depot at 4277 S. Eldridge Street, Morrison.

We'll visit some of the large and small bodies of water in Park County seeking uncommon and rare waterbirds such as scoters, loons, interesting gulls, large numbers of ducks, and sometimes there are longspurs and more. Limited walking. Bring scopes.

Northeastern Colorado Tuesday, October 23 5:30 AM - 7:00 PM

David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Strenuous
Maximum Participants: 10

Continued on page 10

eBird Tip of the Month: Understanding and Using Hotspots on eBird Mobile

By Gregg Goodrich

You have probably heard of it, but just what, exactly, is an eBird Hotspot?

It's a birding location designated by eBird. When birders go birding at a hotspot and log their data under that location on eBird, it consolidates all of their data for that location. Hotspots are a central feature of eBird and an easy way for you to log what birds you see at a known location. By doing so, you contribute to the eBird database that scientists use to study patterns of bird distribution and abundance. Thus, your observations contribute to conservation of birds and biodiversity. Fully understanding and using Hotspots on eBird mobile will also make you a better birder.

"Hotspot" is a bit of a misnomer, as DFO Past President Joe Roller noted in an excellent article on the topic last year in *The Lark Bunting*. For additional insight into the concept of hotspots, read Joe's piece in the April 2016 issue, which is [archived on the DFO website](#).

Regardless of whether an eBird Hotspot is a truly *hot* birding location or much bigger than a *spot*, every one of them has been approved for eBird use by a hotspot reviewer. These volunteers make sure hotspots are on public property, with safe parking. Joe is the hotspot reviewer for Colorado, and he also reviews them for several foreign countries.

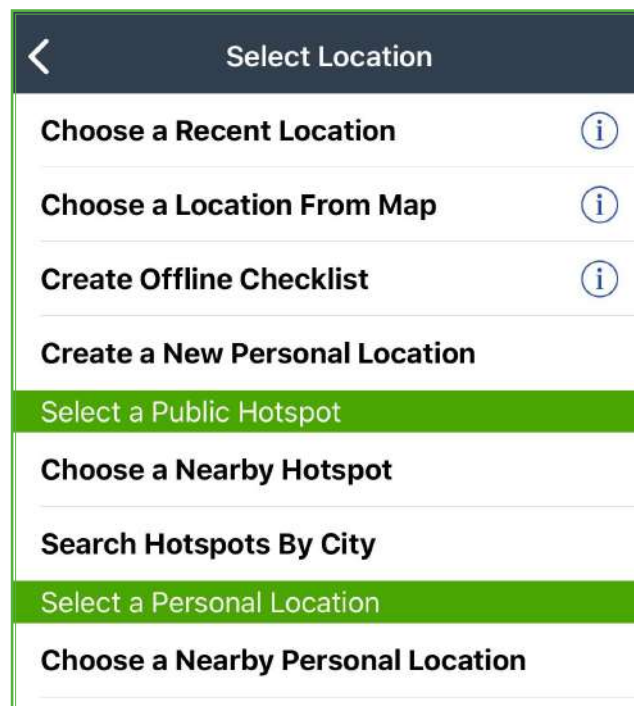
So, how do we use eBird Hotspots on the eBird mobile app? As I have mentioned in previous eBird Tip of the Month articles, this application is the most efficient way to log your birds on a birding field trip. Once installed on your smart phone, it automatically records the start time, length of time, distance, and route of your field trip. It also generates a list of potential birds for your location, and it provides a place to log comments and breeding status. Logging bird sightings as you go increases your accuracy, too, so that you have a complete field trip list at a hotspot at trip's end.

(Incidentally, DFO uses eBird to log and keep track of all birds seen on field trips.)

Here is how to use eBird mobile to select an eBird Hotspot and begin logging birds on your outing:

- Download the eBird mobile app to your smart phone. If this is the first time you are using eBird mobile, you will be prompted to enter your eBird ID and password.
- On the opening screen, touch the big green "Start a New Checklist" button. The "?" symbol in the lower left is the "help" icon; the gear symbol in the lower right is for settings.

The next screen presents you with several options:



Choose a Location From Map (the second option from the top) is your best choice if you are at a new location and have good cell service. But the other options can be used depending on your situation.

Choose a Recent Location is useful if you have birded here recently.

Create Offline Checklist is handy if you are out of cell phone range. Once you are back within cellphone

coverage, the app will prompt you to select a location before you submit your list.

Create a New Personal Location allows you to set a location if there's not an eBird Hotspot near you or associated with the place where you are birding.

Select a Public Hotspot will bring up names of hotspots near your location and "Search Hotspots by City" lets you enter a location name. Both are useful if you know the area or if you don't want to use the map to find a hotspot.

Choose a Nearby Personal Location allows you to use a personal location you created on a previous birding visit to the site.

- If you select "Choose a Location from Map," you will see a map with red teardrops that represent other eBird Hotspots. The blue circle with white center on the screen is your current location.



When you select a red teardrop, the name of that eBird Hotspot appears in the white box at the top of the screen and the teardrop changes from red to yellow.

By the way: In the particular screen-shot example shown here, the white-box message says to "use a county-specific hotspot." That's because the county line between Jefferson and Douglas counties runs through the reservoir, and there are eBird markers for both sides to record data accurately by county. In this case, you would choose spots in the water on either side of the yellow teardrop. This is handy when recording birds seen on or over the water.

Better yet, choose a hotspot closest to your location. Then press the "next" button in the upper right corner of the screen.

- Now the screen prompts you to "Set Date & Time." Click "Reset to Now," then click "Start New Checklist" on the green bar at the bottom of this screen. You now have a checklist of all commonly seen birds at the location.
- Now you can begin to enter birds in the search box at the top as you see them. Say you just saw 2 American Robins. In the top search box, type "2 rob." Be sure to put a space between the number and the name. On the line below, the app will show that "American Robin" was found with your abbreviated search.

Touch on "American Robin" on that list, and 2 American Robins will be added to your eBird list for this outing. If you know the bird banding codes for the bird you want to log (in this case, AMRO), you can use it to quickly bring up the species name. But any part of the name will bring up matches for the full-name listing.

When you log any subsequent American Robins that you see, they are added to your running total for that species. So it goes for every species. If you want to enter additional comments about a sighting or a species breeding code, select the bird from the list and a "details" screen will appear for you to fill in.

Chatfield SP--Marina Sandspit
Aug 28, 2018 at 4:27 AM

Are you submitting a complete checklist of the birds you were able to identify? ⓘ

TRAVELING Change

Number of Observers +

Duration (minutes) ⌚

Distance (miles)

CHECKLIST COMMENTS

SPECIES REPORTED Add Species

1	American Robin
---	----------------

Submit

- When you have logged your last bird sighting on an outing, the screen above shows the details of your trip. (If needed, you can even change the number of observers.)

Before you can submit your trip list to eBird, you need to answer “Yes” at the top of the screen to confirm you are submitting a complete checklist of all birds seen. Then select the Submit button at the bottom in the green bar. Your checklist is now in eBird, and you can find it in your eBird account at <https://ebird.org/myebird>.

NOTE: Would you like to try this in the field with eBird Tip of the Month author Gregg Goodrich? Gregg will lead a DFO field trip on Nov. 15, 8 a.m. to noon, at Chatfield State Park. This is an opportunity to learn many tips and tricks for using the app to make your checklists easy to enter and accurate.

You can register for this trip beginning Oct. 1 via the DFO website at www.dfobirds.org. Be sure to download the eBird mobile app before the day of the trip.

Northeastern Colorado, October 23 cont.

Directions: Meet at the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Office in Denver, 6060 N Broadway.

This full day trip will move among sites along the I-76 corridor beginning in Morgan County and continuing northeast to Washington and Logan counties. We will seek rare fall migrants and a wide variety of species. Be ready to carpool from the meeting place. Expect long drives and moderate walking. Bring lunch and scopes.

Park County Explorations

Monday, October 29

5:30 AM - 4:00 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at SW corner of Safeway parking lot at NE corner of Yosemite and Lincoln Ave in Lone Tree about 1 mile west of I-25. Park away from store.

This trip will include a visit to some of the large and small bodies of water in Park County seeking uncommon and rare waterbirds. We will also visit other spots along the county's southern margin. Limited walking. Bring lunch and scopes.

Colorado Eastern Prairie

Tuesday, October 30

5:30 AM - 6:00 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Denver area meeting location to be announced before the trip

This full day trip will likely focus on Yuma and Kit Carson counties. We hope for a nice variety of species, maybe some eastern specialties, and maybe a rare bird. Plan to carpool from the meeting spot. Some long drives between stops. Bring lunch.

Denver Field Ornithologists

OFFICERS

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October	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
November	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
December	Jill Boice	303-863-7580

DFO logo by Radeaux

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The Lark Bunting

DFO publishes The Lark Bunting monthly. Readers are encouraged to submit original articles, book reviews, or photos for publication. Please submit articles by the 1st of the month to Sharon Tinianow, editor, at sharontinianow@gmail.com. Please submit photos of birds or of bird outings as image files to Jim Esten, photo editor, at jcesten@gmail.com. Credit will be given to authors and photographers. The editors reserve the right to select suitable articles and photos for publication and to edit any selected materials.

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DFO monthly meetings through November 2018 are held at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science and are free and open to the public. Beginning in January 2019, DFO's eight monthly meetings will be held at the Unity Spiritual Center Denver, 3021 S. University Blvd. on the fourth Monday of each month, January through April and August through November. Check below for dates. Updated information about monthly meetings can be found on the DFO website and on the front page of *The Lark Bunting*.

October 1: Seth Gallagher
Sage Grouse Conservation: one conversation at a time

November 5: Bill Eden
Birding in Senegal and The Gambia – A Taste of West African Species

January 28: Dave Leatherman
The Natural Wonders of Southeastern Colorado

Denver Field Ornithologists Membership Application

Join online at <http://dfobirds.org>, or by mail.

DFO memberships expire Dec. 31; valid for the next year if paid after Oct. 1.

DFO provides grants to individuals or organizations whose mission includes ornithological research, education, and conservation.

DFO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

- ☐ Annual family membership (electronic *The Lark Bunting*) \$ 25
☐ Student membership (age ≤ 26) \$ 10
☐ Research, Education, & Conservation Grant Fund donation \$ _____

Total \$ _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____

Email (legible) _____

(Must include for electronic *The Lark Bunting*)

Check payable to DFO and send to:
 Sue Summers, 2364 W Costilla Ave, Littleton, CO 80120-3502

The Lark Bunting
 Denver Field Ornithologists
 10826 E. Maplewood Place
 Englewood, CO 80111-5742



The Lark Bunting

DENVER FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS/NOVEMBER 2018/VOL 54 NO 11

HTTP://DFOBIRDS.ORG

Speaker Series 2018

This fall, the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, in collaboration with the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, is presenting two events that DFO members may be interested in attending. Both events will be held at DMNS and details about cost and registration may be found at www.dmns.org/learn/adults/after-hours/.

**Tuesday, October 30
7:00 PM
Ricketson Auditorium**

Dr. Ellen Ketterson, author of *The Juncos' Journey: Migration and Adaptation in Our Changing World* and professor of biology at Indiana University Bloomington, will address our need as invested citizens to understand animal migration and seasonality in relation to the loss of biodiversity.

**Wednesday, November 14
7:00 PM
Phipps Theater**

Kirk Wallace Johnson, author of *The Feather Thief: Beauty, Obsession, and the Natural History Heist of the Century*, will share the story behind his account of a bizarre theft of museum bird specimens in 2009. A book sale and signing will follow his presentation.

Monthly Program

This is last DFO monthly program for 2018. It will take place in the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, Ricketson Auditorium, beginning at 7 p.m. Enter through the north side security/employee entrance and tell the guard you are there for the DFO meeting. Programs will resume in January 2019.

Monday, November 5

***Birding in Senegal and The Gambia – A Taste of West African Species*
Bill Eden**

Join wildlife photographer Bill Eden for a virtual 15-day birding trip to the countries of The Gambia and Senegal in Western Africa. The field guide “Birds of Senegal and The Gambia” by Borrow and Demey lists 680 bird species found in these two countries. Although they don’t have the avian notoriety of Kenya, Senegal and The Gambia are excellent places to see birds. Eden will share photos of many birds, including the African Pygmy Kingfisher, Northern Carmine Bee-eater, the Abyssinian Ground Roller, Giant Kingfisher and the “must see” Egyptian Plover.



Bill Eden

Birds and birding have been a lifelong interest for Eden. He grew up in New York State with parents that enjoyed nature. His early summers were spent at their camp in the Adirondack Mountains where there were plenty of birds. Decades later he moved to Colorado and participated in Hugh and Urling Kingery’s beginning birding class. He enrolled in the Master Birder Program with Audubon Society of Greater Denver and spent nine years on the Master Birding Program’s steering committee.

In addition, Eden worked with Meredith McBurney at the Chatfield bird banding station for eight years. He has enjoyed many birding trips throughout the United States and to over 20 countries, such as Malaysian Borneo, Madagascar, Brazil, Honduras, Iceland, Uganda and Tanzania. He incorporates an interest in wildlife photography by photographing birds, mammals and other animals.

Goulart Becomes DFO Grants Committee Chair



Photo: William Bond

From the President
Chuck Hundertmark

At the August meeting, the DFO board elected Chris Goulart as a director and chair of the Grants Committee. He will serve until the April 2019 meeting when he will be nominated for election to a full term as director.

Goulart succeeds Candice Johnson as chair of the committee. Dr. Johnson chaired the Grants Committee for several years during which she and committee members Carol Cochran and Tina Jones expanded outreach to potential grant applicants. Their efforts increased both the number and quality of grant applications. Johnson will assist Goulart as he transitions into this important leadership role.

Some of you may know Goulart as a DFO field trip leader. He comes to the Grants Committee with a bachelor's degree in zoology. He participated in a number of animal research projects including projects leading to publications. He authored more than 20 publications. His current career is in risk management and safety.

DFO grants are funded by the generous donations of members. The grants support bird research, education and conservation projects. Recently funded projects have examined Flammulated Owl habitat selection, Greater Sage Grouse response to mining disturbance, and Black Swift movement patterns. Grants also aided educational banding at Chico Basin Ranch and a study of cattle stocking rate impacts on plains raptors.

Many members make their donations when they renew their DFO membership. Reminders to renew your membership will be arriving in your email in box shortly, but you can support the DFO grants program anytime. Donations can be made on the DFO website at <https://dfobirds.org/Grants/Donate.aspx>.

Chatfield State Park Update

By Gregg Goodrich

Chatfield State Park has closed many areas and roads due to construction around the reservoir. It is not possible to go from one side of the park to the other on the perimeter road inside the park, but it is still possible to access some of the prime birding locations.

Beginning October 1, the perimeter road was closed from the Park Headquarters on the east side of the park to just south of the Swim Beach on the west side of the park. The following directions will help you access the park and up-to-date information can be found on a [special construction website](#). Click on each area on the link below to get the details for that area. The following areas are scheduled to reopen in May 2019.

- The Swim Beach, Eagle Cove, Massey Draw, Deer Creek, North Boat Ramp, and the dog run can be accessed using the west entrance off Wadsworth. The Swim Beach is supposed to open in October on the west side.
- All open sites on the eastern and south side of Chatfield such as the Airplane Field, Old Heron Overlook, Campgrounds, and the Park Headquarters can be accessed from the south entrance off Titan Road.
- The Plum Creek, Sandspit, Marina and Handicap Fisherman's Pier areas are all closed on the east side.
- The Kingfisher Bridge area is also closed because the road is closed. A new bridge is being built over the South Platte River where the old Kingfisher Bridge was located.
- On the west side, the gravel ponds are closed just west of the river at the Kingfisher bridge.

October Program Review

By Sharon Tinianow

Seth Gallagher, program manager for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), delivered a compelling program to 55 DFO members and guests on October 1. He outlined for us how his development of a personal conservation ethic informs his current work managing conservation programs out of NFWF Rocky Mountain Region Office in Denver. As this was the first time Gallagher shared this presentation, we can call it the world premiere of *Sage Grouse Conservation: One Conversation at a Time*.

Gallagher experienced what is sometimes referred to as a “free range childhood” growing up on Staten Island, NY and in Virginia’s Piedmont region. The suburban settings in which he lived were augmented by plenty of outdoor experiences, including visits to his grandmother’s home in the Catskills. Along the way he witnessed the human impact on the land from the Fresh Kills Landfill in Staten Island to the massive oil refineries of Linden, NJ. The beach where he and his friends fished for bass were littered with medical waste, including syringes and IV bags.

He became so outraged that he joined Greenpeace when he was in the fifth grade. The anger led to confusion and despair as he took in what seemed like insurmountable environmental challenges. Then an aptitude test in school suggested he pursue a career as a rancher. This helped him identify for himself his deep love of wild places and for rural landscapes.

Many other experiences over the years led Gallagher to ask tough questions and wrestle with the guilt of being human. Can we live resource dependent lives and rectify the hypocrisy? Can we maintain a quality of life and not utilize land in ways that are harmful? Is it always “us” against “them”? And, who is us and who is them?

His desire for collaborative work on environmental issues led him take a position with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, which funds projects that are public/private partnerships seeking collaborative solutions. The three-year-old Northern Great Plains Grasslands project is one such project that is studying and protecting the sagebrush landscapes of North America.

Gallagher provided some background on the Sage Grouse – symbol of the Western Plains – and the habitat on which it depends. Many believed this bird would be the next Spotted Owl as populations declined due to an assortment of land use pressures. The historic population of Sage Grouse was somewhere between 1.6 million and 6 million individuals. Today there are approximately 450,000 birds.

Their landscape needs are very specific and are different depending on the season. In the spring, male Sage Grouse perform their mating display on leks. They are notoriously loyal to the leks, returning to them year after year. Females nest within a half mile of the lek in habitat that features sagebrush cover and grass for food.

When the chicks fledge they seek the protein that an insect diet provides. That requires wetter areas that support the forbs that attract insects. In Winter, the birds migrate locally to sagebrush habitat that supplies both food and cover.

Any surface disturbance is a threat to the Sage Grouse. That includes wind power development, oil and gas extraction, roads, and agriculture. Fire regimes that suppress the natural cycle of fire can allow conifers to grow. Even one conifer per acre will discourage Sage Grouse. Cheat grass, an alien grass species that greens up early in the spring but turns brown in summer, threatens the sagebrush habitat on which the Sage Grouse depends.

A controversy over the Sage Grouse came to a head in 2015 when federal government opted to not list the Sage Grouse as an endangered species. While it may sound like the wrong move, it actually put the power to manage the land for Sage Grouse in the hands of state game and fish agencies. This made it possible for private land owners to work with local government agencies to develop the most appropriate plan for each locale.

Some of the techniques employed are conservation easements where the government purchases the development rights to private land, ensuring the land will stay intact in perpetuity. Conifer removal programs

Continued on page 6

Ptarmigan Award Presented to Karen von Saltza

By Chuck Hundertmark

At the October DFO meeting, I had the honor of presenting the Ptarmigan Award to Karen von Saltza for her service to DFO and her work advancing bird study in Colorado. Von Saltza has been a member of DFO since 1999 and is currently chair of the DFO Field Trip Committee.

In 2012, DFO leaders recognized the organization needed to improve the way field trip leaders were recruited and trained. Von Saltza approached me and volunteered to lead the trip leader development effort. She assumed the role of Leadership Development Committee chair, organizing the committee and leading it through a systematic effort that began with a survey of DFO members to identify what they considered characteristics of a good trip leader.



Chuck Hundertmark presents Ptarmigan Award to Karen von Saltza.
Credit: Gregg Goodrich

Over what became more than a year-long effort, she hosted committee meetings in her home and guided the committee through development of the *Field Trip Leader Manual* and *Field Trip Standards and Best Practices*. The manual and standards recognized that, in addition to helping people enjoy birds, trip leaders needed to ensure the safety of trip participants, deal with possible emergencies, and accomplish a variety of administrative tasks.

Recognizing that the manual would be a big leap for DFO's core of veteran trip leaders, the committee next designed a pilot workshop to introduce the manual and get leader feedback. As the committee did its work, members began identifying ways that the job of trip leaders could be simplified with web site tools. At the time, DFO

was also in the process of developing a new web site led by Kay Niyo. Von Saltza began working with Niyo and web designer Ann Johnson to integrate field trip management tools into the new web site.

The outcome was our current web site that allows trip registration online, waiver acceptance, and other features that make field trip management easier for both leaders and participants.

With the rollout of the new program, the committee was renamed the Field Trip Committee. Von Saltza became the chair and accepted a Board position. Under her leadership, the committee introduced the annual Field Trip Leader Forum, which engages trip leaders in discussions about ways to continually improve our field trip program.

Von Saltza has also advanced bird study in Colorado through her involvement with Audubon Society of Greater Denver's Master Birder program. She served many years as a leader and mentor in that program. She leads monthly "Walk the Wetlands" field trips at Cherry Creek State Park engaging veteran birders and newcomers alike.

I know I speak for all of us at DFO when I say we are grateful to von Saltza for her dedication to the DFO mission and her tireless work to support birds, birding, and bird conservation.

September Flight Log

By David Suddjian

DFO added 12 new species to the Big Year count in September, bringing the total to 348 species for the past nine months. We are winging our way toward our new challenge goal of 365 species. DFO fielded 24 trips in September, including the annual Fall Counts led by DFO and incorporated as field trips into the Big Year effort.



The usual rundown by the numbers follows. Not revealed among that data are many outstanding birding experiences and extravaganzas enjoyed on our DFO field trips. The level of birding adventure and exploration on these Big Year trips has been a real joy. We have visited so many areas at great times of the season and have consistently contributed quality eBird data, adding substantially to the reports from areas that have limited birding coverage. Now the arc of the year shifts back to short days and cold weather. But don't let that deter you from selecting some of our Big Year trips yet to come. We will close the year strong with participation by many, seeking loons, scoters, rare gulls, warblers, sapsuckers, and sparrows. And maybe something new, the name of which we can't even guess.

The Fall Counts added three species. Other trips went to the greater Denver/Boulder metro areas and adjacent Park County. There were significant outings further afield: a far-reaching chase trip to Stalker Lake in Yuma County; a two-day trip to the Northwest focused on Routt, Moffat, and Rio Blanco counties; a three-day trip Southeast to the Lamar region; a two-day trip to the Eastern Prairie focused on Cheyenne, Kit Carson, and Yuma counties; and trips to Pueblo Reservoir, Chico Basin, and Prewitt and Jackson Reservoirs. In sum, we were everywhere, or so it seemed.

Species on the Colorado list were coded to help our planning:

- Code 1 – expected without special planning (193 species total from the state list)
- Code 2 – expected but some basic planning is needed (77 species total)
- Code 3 – specialties requiring trips to particular places at the right time (68 species total)
- Code 4 – rarities that we can't specifically plan to encounter (165 species total)

By the end of September, we had found 100 percent of the Code 1 and the Code 2 species, 69 percent of the Code 3 species, and 19 percent of the Code 4 species.

New Code 4 species found in September were:

- Yellow-crowned Night-Heron at Stalker Lake SWA in Yuma County
- White-eyed Vireo at Castlewood Canyon in Douglas County
- Parasitic Jaeger at Chatfield Reservoir in Douglas County
- Long-tailed Jaeger at Chatfield Reservoir in Jefferson County
- Prothonotary Warbler at Chatfield Reservoir in Jefferson County
- Ruby-throated Hummingbird at Lamar in Prowers County
- Palm Warbler at New Republican SWA in Yuma County

New Code 3 species found in September were:

- Sabine's Gull at Chatfield Reservoir in Douglas or Jefferson County
- Mew Gull at Stagecoach Reservoir in Routt County

New Code 2 species found in September were:

- Common Tern at Pueblo Reservoir in Pueblo County
- Black-bellied Plover at Prewitt Reservoir in Washington County
- Caspian Tern at Cherry Creek Reservoir in Arapahoe County

Continued on page 6

OCT REVIEW *cont. from page 3*

not only help the Sage Grouse, they also help the rancher. Conifers compete with forage plants for water, so removing the trees makes it possible for cattle to graze on the land.

In the Gunnison Basin, wet meadow hydrology is being improved through the construction of masonry structures that slow the flow of water across the land. This is another win-win solution as it provides the rancher with a wet hay meadow – a perfectly fine place to raise young Sage Grouse. Changes in the energy development sector are promising. A smaller footprint for oil and gas wells minimizes the impact on the land from traffic and noise.

Gallagher is optimistic about the future for the Sage Grouse. He believes that the way to manage for this species is not “us against them.” It is all of us in it together. And, by the way, the Fresh Kills Landfill is now park land, no doubt supporting a variety of bird species and a place for humans to connect with the natural world.

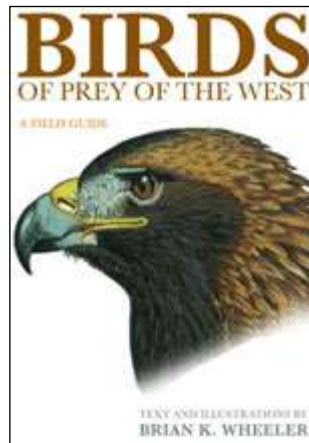
FLIGHT LOG *cont. from page 5*

This is a pretty hot list for DFO field trips. It includes two species found for the first time ever on a DFO trip, the Yellow-crowned Night-Heron and the Ruby-throated Hummingbird; six species found for the second time ever, the Black-bellied Plover, White-eyed Vireo, Mew Gull, Parasitic Jaeger, Prothonotary Warbler and Palm Warbler; and two species found for the third time, the Caspian Tern and Long-tailed Jaeger.

There are still two months left to our Big Year. Join in the fun!

Raising the Bar on Raptor ID: A review of Wheeler’s new guide

By Chuck Hundertmark



Birds of Prey of the West: A Field Guide
Brian K. Wheeler
Princeton University Press (2018)

Brian K. Wheeler’s *Birds of Prey of the West: A Field Guide* together with its eastern companion volume brings an exciting new level of detail and challenge to the joys of raptor watching. From the opening preface and introduction to the final discussion of “Reasons for the Aplomado Falcon’s Demise and Difficulties in Reestablishing Populations,” the western guide is packed with compelling information and helpful insights.

The “Introduction” begins with a discussion of recent changes in the classification of diurnal birds of prey. The most significant change was the separation of falcons from the other diurnal raptors, placing them closer to parrots and passerines than to ospreys, eagles, and hawks. Wheeler’s discussion of the reasons for this and other changes is the clearest and most concise I have read.

Central to the organization of the book are the 85 color plates. Careful observers will note that unlike most field guides with their uniform white background on all plates, Wheeler has employed different background colors for various species that work best with each illustration. Artful illustrations depict each species in multiple flight and perched views. For each species, and in many cases subspecies, Wheeler also illustrates the range of age and sex classes that can be recognized in the field.

As a result, the Swainson’s Hawk, which gets a single plate in *The Sibley Guide to Birds* second edition, receives four full plates in Wheeler’s western guide. The Red-tailed Hawk, with its multiple subspecies and color morphs, is treated in 14 plates and 48 pages.

Opposite each plate, a page of text begins with an overview of the species age class illustrated, then provides brief details of each illustration on the plate. In years of watching Northern Harriers to determine their age and sex, I never paid attention to the “spectacle.” But on page 80, accompanying Plate 10, Wheeler notes, “Pale ‘spectacle’ encircles eye on all ages and sexes.”

The large range maps that accompany each species account are another plus for the reader, allowing a more granular presentation of range for species and, in some cases, subspecies.

Wheeler currently lives in Firestone, Colorado. His love of raptors shows in the careful detail of every illustration and every line of text. Birders will find that the guide opens new challenges and delights in observing raptors. Raptor monitors will find the guide indispensable, as well, as they ask, “Is that very pale Red-tail really a Krider’s or simply a light Eastern subspecies? Or might it be an Eastern x Krider’s?”

Wild Bird Rescue and Rehabilitation Forges Ahead

By Sam Sotiros, Board President of Wild Bird Rescue and Rehabilitation



A juvenile robin is examined by WBRR worker.

"Hi, I have found a bird that looks like it's hurt. What should I do?"

This is a common question that Wild Bird Rescue and Rehab (WBRR) receives almost every day. The mission of WBRR, a 501(c) not-for-profit, is to rescue, rehabilitate, and release wild birds that are sick, injured, orphaned, or kidnapped. The center is located at 12150 West 44th Avenue in Wheat Ridge.

WBRR is licensed and regulated by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and by Colorado Parks and Wildlife. The center is staffed by two licensed wildlife rehabilitators, four additional wildlife technicians and volunteers all of whom are passionate about birds.

WBRR is committed to offering excellent care for all wild birds brought to its center and to developing and enhancing treatment protocols. Presently, the center is licensed to handle small passerines and small birds of other orders. At this time, WBRR cannot treat large corvids, large waterfowl or waterbirds, and raptors. If these large birds are brought in to the center they are held

overnight to stabilize the birds. They are then transported to other licensed rehabbers outside of Denver.

WBRR is currently studying options to expand its center to accept and treat the larger birds. Over the years, WBRR has treated numerous injured American White Pelicans and Blue Herons, typically bound with fishing line, and gamebirds wounded by shotgun pellets.

In addition to rescuing and rehabbing wild birds, WBRR's secondary mission is to educate the public on wild birds. Along with providing information on how to handle birds in distress, the organization leads guided outdoor bird walks for the public.

People often bring in young birds that they find hopping around on the ground believing them to be abandoned. They fear the baby will be harmed by animals and often justifiably so. Typically, the "rescuers" have not taken the time to observe the bird throughout the day to determine whether the parents are still around and feeding the baby. After an

examination determines that the bird is in good health, WBRR usually asks the rescuer to return the bird to the location where it was found.

Not all stories end that easily or happily. Many birds that are brought to the center are too sick or injured to recover. The survival rate of birds that WBRR treats and releases is over 50 percent. The primary reason birds are brought to the center are: animal attacks by cats, dogs, and raptors; collisions with windows and cars; nests displaced or abandoned; and birds orphaned, sick or kidnapped.

At this time, WBRR is recruiting volunteers to help in a variety of ways, including a vibrant, skilled, and passionate volunteer Executive Director and board members to lead the organization. The goal is to grow the organization so that it is capable of handling the Denver Metro area bird population. This will require significant volunteer hours and the establishment of stable funding sources to sustain a full-time paid staff. For more information, visit the [WBRR website](#).

November Field Trips

Register for DFO field trips on the [website](#) or contact the leader directly. Bring your own binoculars, water, snacks or lunch, and sunscreen. Dress for the weather. Directions and detailed descriptions of each trip can be found on the website. December field trips will appear on the website on Nov 1. Please be considerate and delete your reservation if you are unable to attend a trip for which you have registered. *NOTE: DFO Big Year 2018 Rules and Regulations* can be found on the website.

Mountain Lakes and Scoter Trip

Saturday, November 3

5:30 AM - 6:30 PM

Joey Kellner

Email: vireo1@comcast.net

Phone: 303-978-1748

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Meet on the side of Deer Creek Canyon Rd just west of Wadsworth.

Join an all-day search for migrant grebes, loons, and scoters. A State Parks pass is required for the drivers of carpooling vehicles.

First Creek at Denver Open Space

Sunday, November 4

6:30 AM - 11:00 AM

Patrick O'Driscoll

Email: patodrisk@gmail.com

Phone: 303-885-6955

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: From east Denver north of I-70, go east on 56th Avenue past Peoria and Chambers toward Peña Boulevard (airport highway). About 2 blocks before Peña, parking is on left (green sign, fenced lot).

Join us to look for fresh winter residents, from Ferruginous Hawks and eagles to Townsend's Solitaires, juncos, and White-Crowned and American Tree sparrows. We'll go

*1.5-miles and back on paved paths
Time permitting, we'll dip into the Arsenal's First Creek Trail.*

Broomfield

Monday, November 5

7:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Dale Pate & David Suddjian

Email: dalepate@gmail.com

Phone: 575-706-4584

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: We will meet at Broomfield Community Park, located north of W. 120th Ave and east of Main Street. Park in slanted parking spots along Community Park Road just west of the Broomfield Library.

We will visit several birding hotspots throughout the morning. Locations may vary depending on most recent sightings. We will walk 1 to 3 miles on mostly level ground. Be ready to add Broomfield County or build your bird list.

Elbert County

Tuesday, November 6

5:30 AM - 4:00 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meet at Bennett off I-70 at the south side of the King Soopers parking lot.

We'll explore some parts of Elbert County and, maybe, Lincoln and Arapahoe Counties, too. We can hope to find Winter Wren, longspurs, raptors, Northern Shrike, and maybe unexpected migrants. Plan to carpool. Restroom opportunities will be very limited.

Cherry Creek SP Wetlands Loop (Arapahoe County)

Sunday, November 11

9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Karen von Saltza

Email: kvonsaltza@yahoo.com

Phone: 303-941-4881

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: Meet at the Prairie Loop lot in Cherry Creek SP. State Parks pass or day pass required. This is a half day of walking that passes through most of the important habitats found in the park over a distance of about 3 miles. Trails could be slippery or muddy. Beginning birders are welcome.

Southwestern Metro Area

Monday, November 12

6:30 AM - 1:00 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at the Home Depot at 4277 S Eldridge St, Morrison.

Specific birding spots will be selected the day of the trip based on what is around and the weather, visiting sites to seek a variety of species. Plan to carpool. Some sites may have moderate walking.

Southeastern Colorado

Wednesday, November 14

5:00 AM - 7:00 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Strenuous

Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meet at the Safeway on Lincoln Avenue and Yosemite, Lone Tree, CO.

November Field Trips Continued...

This trip will seek late migrants, waterfowl, geese, raptors, stragglers, and rare birds as we explore east from Otero County to Kiowa County. Plan to carpool. Be ready for long drives. Forecast of winter weather may lead to a modification of the plans for the day.

Cherry Creek State Park (Arapahoe County) Wednesday, November 14 8:15 AM - 12:00 PM

Robert Righter
Email: Rorighte@earthlink.net
Phone: 303-9081666
Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet at the west marina parking lot. State Parks pass or day pass required.

Look for gulls, waterfowl, and a variety of birds. We will carpool to the various stops and walk 1-2 miles. Bring scopes if you have them.

South Platte River Reservoir and River Trail Thursday, November 15 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Gregg Goodrich
Email: GreggGoodrich@gmail.com
Phone: 303-655-9135
Trail Difficulty: Easy
Maximum Participants: 14

Directions: Meet at parking lot adjoining the South Platte Reservoir. Take C-470 to the Wadsworth Blvd exit and turn north onto Wadsworth. Turn right (east) on West Chatfield Avenue and follow the road for 1.5 miles. Make a sharp right turn right at the South Platte Reservoir sign and go to the parking lot.

This is an eBird Mobile app training trip. Please come to the site with your eBird Mobile already downloaded on your smart phone and have your eBird logon ID and password already entered into the app. You will learn many tips and

tricks of easy entry on the app for your lists. We will bird the reservoir and a few lakes in the park.

Guanella Pass Friday, November 16 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Mark Amershek
Email: mamershek@msn.com
Phone: 303-329-8646
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: We will meet at the Stegosaurus Parking Lot at I-70 and Highway 93. It is in the southeast corner of the intersection.

We will encounter a variety of habitats including coniferous forests, mixed forest, willow carr, subalpine and alpine regions. We may take short walks up to 1-2 miles at high altitude. Wear sturdy shoes. We will be looking for sparrows, woodpeckers, and perhaps the elusive ptarmigan.

Bluff Lake Nature Center Saturday, November 17 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Colleen Nunn
Email: cnunn6789@gmail.com
Phone: 303-520-7496
Trail Difficulty: Easy
Maximum Participants: 14

Directions: From I-70 East, go south on Havana Street and left onto E 29th Dr, which then joins Martin Luther King Jr Blvd. Continue on Martin Luther King Jr Blvd to Bluff Lake Nature Center in the park on left side.

Bluff Lake offers a great range of habitat. This attracts a variety of raptors, songbirds, and ducks in winter. Portable toilets are on site but no potable water. We'll be walking 1-1.5 miles around the pond. If the weather is agreeable and people are interested, up the creek area. Scopes are optional.

Pueblo and Cañon City Areas Monday, November 19 5:00 AM - 7:00 PM

David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Strenuous
Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at the Safeway on Lincoln Ave and Yosemite (1 mile west of I-25 on the north side of Lincoln), Lone Tree CO.

A full, fast-paced day of birding hitting many hotspots seeking the Big Year target Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, scoters, loon, interesting gulls, and rare migrant landbirds. We will focus on Canyon City areas and the Pueblo Reservoir area.

Northeastern Colorado Tuesday, November 20 5:30 AM - 6:00 PM

David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Strenuous
Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meet at the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Office in Denver, 6060 N Broadway.

This trip will focus on Morgan County, but may also reach farther northeast. We will seek a wide variety of species, including Winter Wren, Long-eared Owl, Swamp Sparrow, and rare stragglers or montane wanderers. Plan for a full day afield.

November Field Trips Continued...

Park County Explorations

Friday, November 23

6:00 AM - 3:00 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meet at King Soopers in Aspen Park off Highway 285 at 25637 Conifer Road. Meet at the south side of the parking lot overlooking Hwy 285.

Come away to explore Park County and bird the big reservoirs, plus forests and feeders. If there has been snow, we might find rosy-finches. We might even find a left-over turkey! Bring scopes if you have them. Some short walking possible.

South Platte River Trail

at E 88th Ave and I-76

Saturday, November 24

8:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Mark Amershek

Email: mamershek@msn.com

Phone: 303-329-8646

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet at the South Platte River Greenway Trailhead parking area at 88th Ave and South Platte River Trail.

We will see lots of ducks, a few raptors, and some hardy winter residents. Hike along paved trails and, occasionally, in the adjacent mud for up to 3 miles.

Denver City Park (Denver County)

Sunday, November 25

7:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Patrick O'Driscoll

Email: patodrisk@gmail.com

Phone: 303-885-6955

Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet at parking strip on north side of Ferril Lake.

We can't promise a post-Thanksgiving wild turkey, but almost anything is possible as winter returns to this urban haven. Expect several species of ducks and geese, plus winter residents like creepers, kinglets, juncos, and solitaires. We'll walk the park from end to end.

Aurora Reservoir and Cherry Creek State Park

Monday, November 26

6:30 AM - 2:00 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the Aurora Reservoir entrance road (S. Powhatten Rd) at E Quincy Avenue, about 1.5 miles east of E470.

We will hope for scoters, long-tailed duck, loons, interesting gulls, and more. We'll spend some time checking for landbirds, too. From there we visit a few spots at Cherry Creek SP or go elsewhere if a rare bird calls us. State parks pass or day use fees required. Bring scopes if you have them and plan for a few moderately long walks.

North-Central Colorado

Tuesday, November 27

6:30 AM - 4:00 PM

David Suddjian & John Malenich

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Office in Denver, 6060 N. Broadway. Meeting place may change and will be announced before trip.

Welcome to new DFO members

Timothy Condon, Pine
Lori Pivonka, Fort Collins

We intend to focus on Larimer County, but may also visit Boulder or Weld counties as we seek rare migrants, warblers, gulls, sparrows, and loons. This fast-paced trip will target several sites. Bring scopes if you have them. Plan to carpool.

Annual Barrow's Goldeneye Count to Silverthorne

Thursday, November 29

7:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Paul Slingsby

Email: paslingsby@comcast.net

Phone: 720-347-5169

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the lower end of the Stegosaurus Park-n-Ride located just south of I-70, exit 259, on the east side of CH-26.

We will count Barrow's Goldeneyes and other birds at the Silverthorne water treatment plant, then drive to Hot Sulphur Springs Lake Granby, Shadow Mountain Lake, and Grand Lake. Spotting scopes and 2-way radios will be useful. We'll find a warm place to buy lunch.

Denver Field Ornithologists

OFFICERS

President	Chuck Hundertmark	chundertmark8@gmail.com
Vice President	Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net
Treasurer	Sue Summers	summerssue@hotmail.com
Secretary	Debbie James	paradox002@aol.com
Membership Chair	Mary Cay Burger	mcburger3@juno.com
Past President	Joe Roller	jroller9@gmail.com

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Bill Turner (2020)	toursbyturner@aol.com

HISTORIAN

Kristine Haglund	303-906-8044	kahaglund1@aol.com
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FIELD TRIP SCHEDULERS

January	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
February	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
March	Bill Wuerthele	303-333-2519
April	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
May	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
June	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
July	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
August	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
September	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
October	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
November	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
December	Jill Boice	303-863-7580

DFO logo by Radeaux

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Will Burt, Jim Esten	admin@dfobirds.org
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LINKS AND CONTACTS

DFO Facebook	Photos and discussion	facebook.com/groups/dfobirds
COBirds	Internet bird-sighting discussion list	cobirds@googlegroups.com
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Tuesday Birders	Mary Keithler	mkeithler@yahoo.com
	Backup contact, Dave Hill	d_d_hill@comcast.net

The Lark Bunting

DFO publishes The Lark Bunting monthly. Readers are encouraged to submit original articles, book reviews, or photos for publication. Please submit articles by the 1st of the month to Sharon Tinianow, editor, at sharontinianow@gmail.com. Please submit photos of birds or of bird outings as image files to Jim Esten, photo editor, at jcesten@gmail.com. Credit will be given to authors and photographers. The editors reserve the right to select suitable articles and photos for publication and to edit any selected materials.

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In 2019, DFO monthly program meetings will be held on the fourth Monday of the month January through April and August through November. They will begin at 7 pm and are held at:
Unity Spiritual Center Denver
3021 S. University Blvd.
Denver

November 5, 2018
Bill Eden
Birding in Senegal and The Gambia
 NOTE: this meeting will be held at DMNS in the Ricketson Auditorium

January 28, 2019
Dave Leatherman
The Natural Wonders of Southern Colorado

Denver Field Ornithologists Membership Application

Join online at <http://dfobirds.org>, or by mail.

DFO memberships expire Dec. 31; valid for the next year if paid after Oct. 1.

DFO provides grants to individuals or organizations whose mission includes ornithological research, education, and conservation.

DFO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

- ☐ Annual family membership (electronic *The Lark Bunting*) \$ 25
☐ Student membership (age ≤ 26) \$ 10
☐ Research, Education, & Conservation Grant Fund donation \$ _____

Total \$ _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____

Email (legible) _____

(Must include for electronic *The Lark Bunting*)

Check payable to DFO and send to:
 Sue Summers, 2364 W Costilla Ave, Littleton, CO 80120-3502

The Lark Bunting
 Denver Field Ornithologists
 10826 E. Maplewood Place
 Englewood, CO 80111-5742



The Lark Bunting

DENVER FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS/DECEMBER 2018/VOL 54 NO 12

[HTTPS://DFOBIRDS.ORG](https://dfobirds.org)

DFO Members! Remember December for Membership Renewal

By Mary Cay Burger

It is that time of year again. All DFO memberships expire on December 31, 2018, so put renewing your membership on your December to-do list. You can print the membership form from this newsletter and mail it in, or you can [renew online](https://dfobirds.org). A new DFO membership bought today will pay for the remainder of 2018 and all of 2019.

Membership fees are modest and help DFO carry out its mission to promote the study and preservation of birds and their habitats. Your dues make it possible for DFO to have a website, publish a newsletter, and bring you excellent speakers for our monthly programs.

At its November meeting, the DFO Board voted to increase dues to members who prefer to have a printed copy of *The Lark Bunting* newsletter mailed to them. The increase will cover the full cost of printing and mailing. Dues for members who get the newsletter via email remain the same.

As we enter the season of gift giving, consider purchasing a membership in DFO. It is a great way to give someone a thoughtful and lasting gift. Go to the [DFO website](https://dfobirds.org) for gift membership information.

Thanks for your past support and thanks in advance for renewing your membership for 2018.

Programs Past . . . and Those to Come in 2019

There is no monthly DFO program in December, which makes this a great month to peruse the programs you missed or relive your favorites again. How is that possible? Most DFO programs are videotaped so that you can watch them on a computer or mobile device. For a few programs where videotaping was not possible, written program reviews are posted for your reading and review.

Here is how to find the programs:

- On the DFO website (<https://dfobirds.org/>), go to “Programs” in the navigation menu at the top of the home page.
- Click on “Past Programs” to open the list of programs. Any of them with a red circle on the far right was videotaped. Click on that red circle to start the video. Scroll down the page below the program list to watch it.
- If there is no red circle, click on the title of the program to read the written article about the program that appeared in *The Lark Bunting*.

The most recent program on video was Bill Eden’s Nov. 5 presentation of photos and stories about birding in Senegal and The Gambia in West Africa. If you missed it, get yourself a hot beverage and settle in for a virtual birding trip to West Africa.

Looking ahead to 2019, DFO monthly programs will be at a new location while the Denver Museum of Nature and Science undertakes renovations where the programs usually take place. Join us in 2019 at Unity Spiritual Center Denver on the fourth Monday of each month at 7 p.m., January through April and August through December. Unity is at 3021 South University Blvd. in Denver.

First up in the new year is a Jan. 29, 2019 presentation by Dave Leatherman, retired forest entomologist and author of a regular column in the Colorado Field Ornithologists journal. His program will be “The Natural Wonders of Southeastern Colorado.” As always, details about upcoming programs and presenters will appear in *The Lark Bunting* and at <https://dfobirds.org/>.

Promoting “Preservation of Birds” Part of DFO’s Mission



Photo: William Bond

From the President Chuck Hundertmark

In October, the DFO Board of Directors took what, in recent history, was an extraordinary action for our organization. We urged members to vote no on Colorado constitutional amendment 74. In the view of the board and most other bird organizations in the state, the amendment would have been extremely detrimental to the preservation of birds and their habitats. (Colorado voters rejected the measure at the polls on Nov. 6, 54 percent to 46 percent.)

Deciding to take this position was not easy for the board. In one of our livelier email discussions, officers and directors exchanged views on whether taking a stand on an election issue would jeopardize our 501c (3) nonprofit status, and also whether such an action falls within the scope of DFO’s mission. One director also suggested that we should have considered the decision in a regular board meeting rather than via email.

In the end, the board majority felt that defeating the amendment was so critical to bird conservation and other preservation issues that we had a responsibility to take a position and communicate it to DFO members as soon as possible.

The issue also brought to the fore the ongoing challenge of carrying out a significant aspect of our organization’s declared mission to “*promote interest in the study and preservation of birds and their habitats.*” DFO Historian Kris Haglund delved into the archives and found that the mission statement appears in the original Articles of Incorporation adopted in March 1935 and is preserved in a handwritten document. Furthermore, the articles include “Supporting local & national movements for their (birds’) protection” as one of the organization’s purposes.

When the board met on Nov. 4, the agenda included a discussion of how DFO should carry out that preservation portion of its mission. Since the late 1960s, DFO has focused primarily on its impressive schedule of regular field trips. Meanwhile, the general assumption in the birding community was that the Audubon Society of Greater Denver would tackle conservation issues.

Today, however, many issues of bird and habitat conservation require more than one voice to generate the necessary support. The rapidly growing population in the Front Range also creates more threats to birds and habitats than a single organization alone can address.

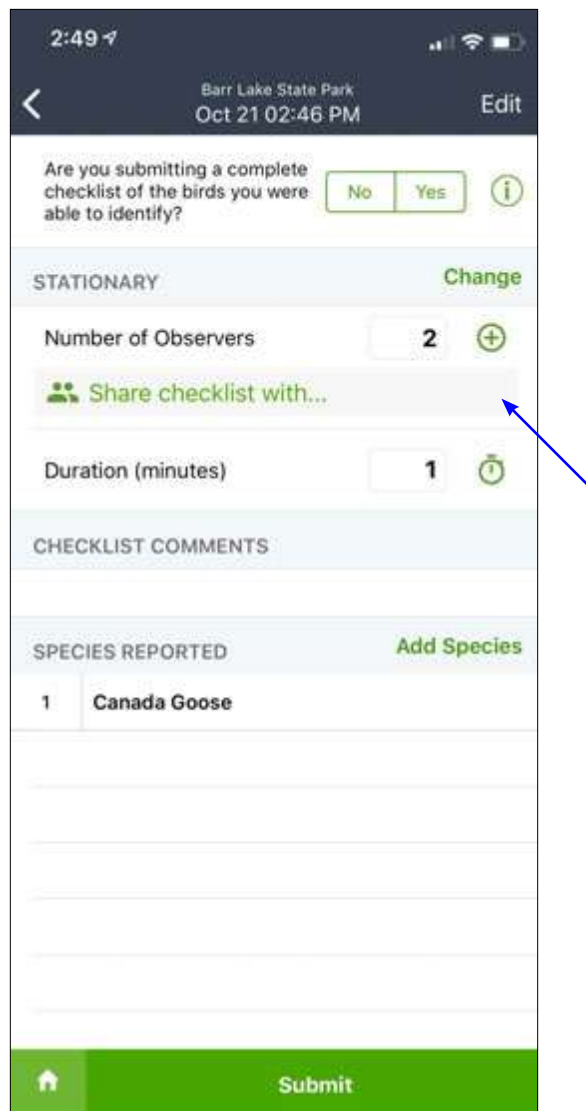
In the coming months, the DFO Board will develop an approach to identifying bird preservation issues and drafting strategies to address them. We’ll need someone to lead the bird and habitat preservation effort, including appropriate ways to communicate these issues to our membership. I’m confident DFO can do this while maintaining its energetic field trip program.

eBird Tip of the Month: Mobile app enhancements

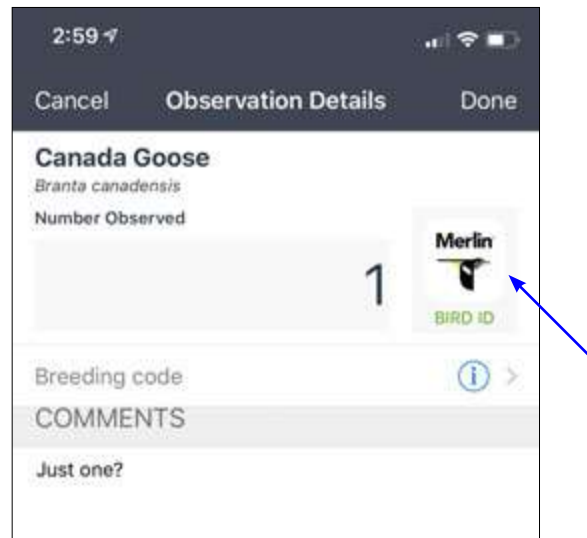
By Gregg Goodrich

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology has recently added several new enhancements to the eBird mobile app. Checklist sharing, Merlin Bird ID, and frequency flags for “infrequent” & “unreported” birds are included in the new releases. eBird mobile just keeps getting better and better!

You can now share your checklists directly from the eBird mobile app. When you update your “Number of Observers” to two or more, you get a “Share Checklists with . . .” hyperlink. Click the link and you can add the eBird IDs or email addresses for the birders with whom you want to share your list.



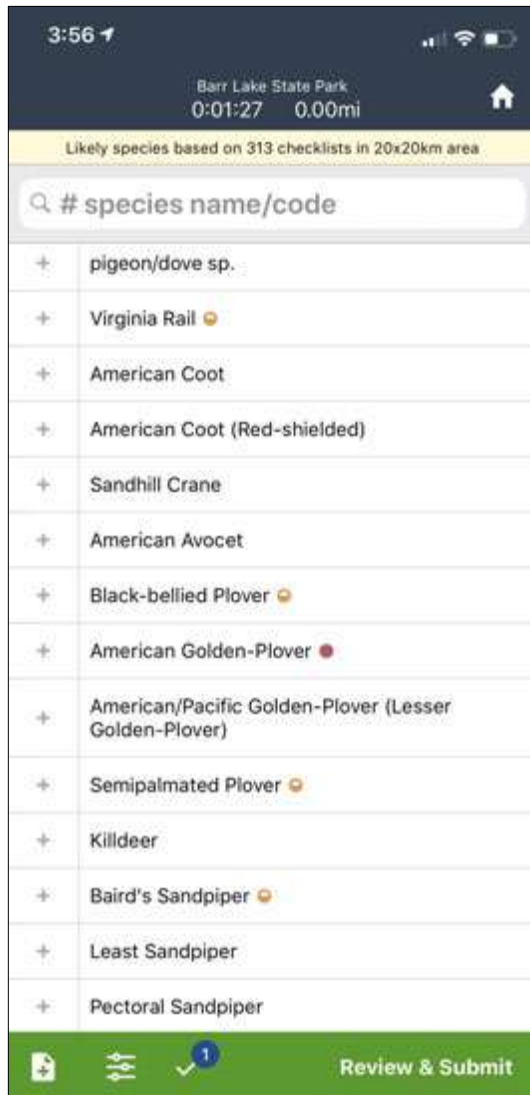
The Merlin Bird ID app from Cornell is a free and separate app. But now you can initiate it from the “Bird Observational Details Screen” on your eBird mobile app. Select any bird in your eBird hotspot checklist and go to the “detail list” screen where you can make comments. To the right of the number of species, you’ll notice the Merlin icon. Click it.



With your click, the Merlin Bird ID field guide listing for that species will open with photos, descriptions, vocalizations, and ranges for bird you specified. This eliminates the need to switch from eBird to a field guide app. To take advantage of this new feature, you will need to install the Merlin Bird ID app.

Bird frequency indicators are now shown to the right of checklist birds that are unusual for an area but not necessarily rare. Look for these indicators – a gold-colored half circle for “infrequent” and a red-colored full circle for “unreported” – to the right of such birds in checklists. The “infrequent” indicator means the bird is reported on less than 5 percent of the checklists for that species at the present time of year and location. A red “unreported” indicator means the bird has never been reported at that eBird hotspot at the current time of year. As you can see below, the red circle next to American Golden Plover says the species has not been reported yet at that place and time of year.

Continued on page 4



Taking advantage of all these new features will help you improve the accuracy of your list, speed up identification, and eliminate the need to go to the website to share your list. In short: eBird Mobile rocks!

Help Bolster DFO's Research, Education, and Conservation Grants Fund

What time is it? DFO membership renewal time, of course. And it's the perfect time for something else important: *Making a donation to DFO's Research, Education, and Conservation Grants Fund!*

The fund helps fulfill an important part of DFO's mission: *the preservation of birds and their habitats*. It's SO easy to donate: Just add the amount you wish to contribute in the designated field online when you renew your membership at <https://dfobirds.org>.

These modest grants provide critical support for scientists and educators whose work contributes to our larger understanding of birds and bird conservation. Last year, DFO members funded nearly \$6,000 in new grants for these worthy projects:

- Habitat selection in Flammulated Owls (Scott Yanco, CU Denver)
- Black Swift movement ecology (Bird Conservancy of the Rockies)
- Cattle stocking rates and abundance of NE Colorado raptors (Angela & James Dwyer, Central Plains Experimental Range and BCO)
- Bird banding and education at Chico Basin Ranch (Ranchlands Foundation)
- Greater Sage Grouse response to surface mine disturbance (Alyssa Kircher, U of Wisconsin)
- Spatiotemporal patterns of habitat use by Mountain Plover (Tyler Michels, CU Denver)

You can find out more about past projects and how to donate on the [DFO website](#). Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Welcome to New DFO Members

William Anderson, Santa Rosa; Karen Axe, Lafayette; Ginny Bergstrom, Lakewood; Timothy Condon, Pine; Thomas Hartigan and Gail Hartigan, Denver; Jennifer Howell, Bennett; Brian Johnson, Englewood; Tim Schirber, Commerce City; Becky Shaw, Denver

Thank you for your contribution to the Research, Conservation, and Education Grants Fund

Carol and Fran Haas, Brian Johnson, Robert Righter, Mary Ann Tavery



Applications Open for DFO's Research-Education-Conservation Grants for 2019

The DFO Research, Education and Conservation Grant Fund is now accepting applications for grants to encourage the study, appreciation, and preservation of birds and their habitats. DFO gives preference to projects in the Denver metropolitan area, the Front Range, the state of Colorado, and the USA, in that order. The awards typically range from \$500 to \$2,000.

DFO grants in 2018 funded important research on Black Swift ecology, the Greater Sage Grouse, Flammulated Owls, and habitat disturbance and use affecting Mountain Plover. Banding and education programs at Chico Basin Ranch also received funds.

Proposals should include a description of project goals and methodology, a complete budget that includes other funding sources, and an indication of any preliminary work already completed. DFO expects successful grantees to provide written reports on their projects, which will be published in *The Lark Bunting* newsletter and on the DFO website. As an alternative, grantees can lead a trip to their research site or make a presentation about their work at the monthly DFO meeting.

The grant application form and a history of past awards are available on the DFO website. The deadline for applications is Feb. 1, 2019. DFO will notify grant awardees in late February.

65th Denver Christmas Bird Count – Saturday, December 15, 2018

Joey Kellner, count leader and compiler

The annual Denver Christmas Bird Count (CBC), sponsored the National Audubon Society, is open to everyone. To participate, call one of the Area Leaders listed below to assist in a particular area or, if you are open to helping in whatever area still needs additional observers, contact Joey Kellner by phone at 303-978-1748 or via email at vireo1@comcast.net.

After a day in the field, the compilation meeting will be held at 5:00 pm at Chatfield State Park Headquarters, located on the south side of the lake near the Heronry Overlook. A State Parks vehicle entry pass or day use permit is required to enter the park. Please carpool, if possible. Your Area Leader can tell you about reimbursement for the entry fee. Please note: The Park Headquarters meeting room can only be accessed from the Titan Road/Roxborough Road entrance on the east side of the Park. Due to construction this year, the road from the west entrance does not go through.

A potluck meal will follow the compilation meeting. All participants are invited to attend and feast, warm up, chat with other birders, and find out how the count fared. It is a lot of fun. Cheryl Teuton will once again coordinate the potluck. Please contact her at 303-912-3341 if you are able to bring a dish to share.

Fees: None! So, no excuses! Come have a great time and help count birds! Beginners and experts all welcome!

The 15-mile diameter “count circle” is subdivided into 24 “count areas” each with a leader. Interested birders should contact Area Leaders for the location that they are interested in from the list below.

Area#	Location	Leader Name	Phone Number
1	Red Rocks Park	Dan Stringer	720-854-5911
2	Lower Bear Creek	Scott Somershoe	615-829-3573
2A	Bear Creek Lake Park	Mark Amershek	303-329-8646
3	Bow Mar/Marston	Bill Hopping	303-809-3053
4A	Lower South Platte – East	Ed Holub	303-979-2194
4B	Lower South Platte – West	Dean Shoup	720-272-9042
5	Highline Ditch	Nancy Crews	303-842-2833
6	Plum Creek	Norm Erthal	303-917-2596
7A	Middle South Platte – West	Charlie Lawrence	303-795-9126
7B	Middle South Platte – East	Urling Kingery	303-814-2723
8	Chatfield State Park	Joey Kellner	303-978-1748
9	Upper South Platte*	Jill Holden	720-288-4018
10	Lower Deer Creek (Chatfield Arboretum)	Riley & Heather Morris	720-666-1644
11	Upper Deer Creek	Paul Slingsby	720-347-5169
12	Yegge Peak	Ann Bonnell	303-979-6211
13	Doublehead Mountain	Amy Davis	303-549-7759
14	North Turkey Creek	Ed Furlong	303-956-8321
15	Indian Hills	Dick Prickett	303-674-0217
16	Upper Bear Creek	Laura Steadman	843-319-5086
17	Ken Caryl Ranch	Tom Bush	303-919-5040
18	Garrison Gate	Bob Shade	303-975-2476
19	Morrison/Willowbrook	Chris Gilbert	804-214-1508
20	Willow Creek	Doris Cruze	303-798-8072
21	Mount Lindo/Willow Springs	Bob Shade	303-975-2476

**To participate in this area, contact the area leader no later than Monday, December 10th.*



Confessions of a Fantasy Birder: Jack and Harold’s “Bird on the Ridge Line”

By Bob Richter

During the 1970s and 1980s, Jack Reddall and Harold Holt were considered the best birders in the Denver Field Ornithologists. They were also the best of friends. But whenever they went birding together, they temporarily set friendship and cordiality aside and replaced them with fierce competitiveness. Neither man was willing to give the other credit for being the first to correctly identify a bird.

Jack and Harold are no longer with us. Before he passed on, Jack told me about a birding adventure involving him and Harold. He told the story with such great enthusiasm and laughter that I am sure both he and Harold would smile to know it is being retold to current DFO members.

One January day, Jack and Harold were birding in the rolling sand hills near Jackson Reservoir in northeastern Colorado. The day was clear and sunny, but by mid-morning, the heat was rising in shimmering waves, making it a challenge to identify birds at a great distance.

When they spotted a rather large, whitish bird perched on a ridge line, Jack announced, in an authoritative tone, “Snowy Owl.” Harold looked at the bird and countered with, “Ferruginous Hawk.” The stage was now set for verbal combustion as each man tenaciously held to his position about the bird’s identity.

It soon became clear that the only way this standoff would be resolved was when the mystery bird finally took flight and revealed the critical field marks that would settle the matter for good.

Suddenly, the whitish figure on the ridge line began to move. It did not fly, however. It . . . hopped? This was no bird at all, but a jackrabbit! The competition dissolved as both birders were proven equally wrong. Jack and Harold quickly became good friends again – until the next time.

Have a good story about mistaken identity while birding? Share it with the DFO community by submitting your tale to Sharon Tinianow, editor of The Lark Bunting, at sharontinianow@gmail.com.

December Field Trips

Register for DFO field trips on the [website](#) or contact the leader directly. Bring your own binoculars, water, snacks or lunch, and sunscreen. Dress for the weather. Directions and detailed descriptions of each trip can be found on the website. New field trips will appear on the first day of each month. Please be considerate and delete your reservation if you are unable to attend a trip for which you have registered. NOTE: [DFO Big Year 2018 Rules and Regulations can be found on the website.](#)

First Creek at Denver Open Space Saturday, December 1

7:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Patrick O'Driscoll
Email: patodrisk@gmail.com
Phone: 303-885-6955
Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Directions: From east Denver north of I-70, go east on 56th Avenue past Peoria and Chambers toward Peña Boulevard. Parking is on left two blocks before Peña.

We will bird from the First Creek Open Space parking lot, down Buckley Road, then turn west into the Arsena. Expect raptors, winter grassland residents, and perhaps a late migrant or two. No restrooms onsite.

South Platte River at West Florida Avenue

Sunday, December 2

9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Bill Wuerthele
Email: wuerthel@ecentral.com
Phone: 303-333-2519
Trail Difficulty: Easy
Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the Overland Pond Parking Lot, just east of the river on West Florida Ave.

The South Platte River here generally stays open in the winter, offering close views of a variety of waterfowl. We will walk along the Platte River Trail covering less than 2 miles total. The trail is level but can be icy.

Aurora Reservoir and Cherry Creek State Park

Monday, December 3

6:15 AM - 1:00 PM

David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the Aurora Reservoir entrance road (S. Powhatan Rd) at E Quincy Avenue, about 1.5 miles east of E470. This is a great time for rare waterbirds, including scoters, Long-tailed Duck, rare geese, and loons. Scopes desired. If there is a rare bird in the region that will be good for the Big Year we may chase it.

South-Central Colorado

Tuesday, December 4

5:00 AM - 6:00 PM

David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at SW corner of Safeway parking lot at NE corner of Yosemite and Lincoln Ave in Lone Tree about 1 mile west of I-25. Park away from store.

This trip will focus on some key sites in Huerfano and Pueblo Counties, including reservoirs and other hot spots, seeking rare waterbirds and early winter landbirds. Bring scopes and lunch. Be ready for a full day and some long drives.

Bar CCC

Thursday, December 6

9:00 AM - 3:30 PM

Diane Roberts
Email: Samatha576@aol.com
Phone: 720-278-9025
Trail Difficulty: Easy
Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meet at Bar CCC Park, 10951 S. Twenty Mile Road, Parker. We will bird a few Douglas County Lakes and surrounding areas beginning at Bar CCC Park, moving to Parker Regional Park, then proceeding to Walker Ponds. Spotting scopes are helpful. Pack a picnic lunch.

Lakes of Lakewood, Belmar Park

Saturday, December 8

8:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Alison Kondler
Email: birdtrills@gmail.com
Phone: 303-904-9140
Trail Difficulty: Easy
Maximum Participants: 11

Directions: Meet at Belmar Historic Park, 800 South Wadsworth Blvd in Lakewood.

We will start at Belmar Historic Park, then drive to various ponds, lakes, and reservoirs in Lakewood looking for ducks and other winter birds. Scopes are optional.

Cherry Creek SP Wetlands Loop (Arapahoe County)

Sunday, December 9

9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Karen von Saltza
Email: kvonsaltza@yahoo.com
Phone: 303-941-4881
Trail Difficulty: Easy

Directions: Meet at the Prairie Loop lot in Cherry Creek SP. State Parks pass or day pass required.

This is a half day of walking that passes through most of the important habitats found in the park

December Field Trips Continued...

over a distance of about 3 miles. Trails could be slippery or muddy. Beginning birders are welcome.

Boulder County **Monday, December 10** **7:30 AM - 1:00 PM**

David Suddjian & John Malenich
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at the northwest corner of the parking lot of the King Soopers at 1650 30th St., Boulder.

Early December can be a good time for unusual birds in Boulder County. This trip will seek rarities that may have been found in the Boulder area, and otherwise visit water and upland habitats to seek a variety of species, and maybe discover something new for the Big Year.

El Paso County **Tuesday, December 11** **6:00 AM - 5:00 PM**

David Suddjian & Diane Roberts
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 8

Directions: Meet at SW corner of Safeway parking lot at NE corner of Yosemite and Lincoln Avenue in Lone Tree about 1 mile west of I-25 away from store.

We will seek any known rarities and try to find our own, visiting a variety of sites seeking wintering birds and tardy migrants.

Chatfield State Park **Sunday, December 16** **8:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

Gregg Goodrich
Email: GreggGoodrich@gmail.com
Phone: 303-655-9135
Trail Difficulty: Easy
Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet near the east entrance to the park and the Highline Canal parking lot along Roxborough Road just before reaching the park entrance. We will carpool from there, as needed.

After a little birding at the Highline Canal we will go to the old Heron Overlook to look for winter land and water migrants. Then, a short stop at the model airplane field.

Platte Canyon Reservoir Chase Trip **Monday, December 17** **7:00 AM - 2:00 PM**

David Suddjian & Dale Pate
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 10

Directions: Meet at the Colorado Parks and Wildlife, 6060 N Broadway to carpool.

We will seek rare birds found on the preceding Denver and Boulder CBCs and other good birds that may be around. Please watch for emails the day before the trip in case of any last-minute change in meeting location.

Aurora Reservoir and Cherry Creek State Park **Tuesday, December 18** **6:45 AM - 2:00 PM**

David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the Aurora Reservoir entrance road (S. Powhaton Rd) at E Quincy Avenue, about 1.5 miles east of E470.

This is a great time for rare waterbirds, including scoters, Long-tailed Duck, rare geese, and loons. Scopes are helpful. If there is a rare

bird in the region that will be good for the Big Year we may chase it.

Aurora Reservoir and Cherry Creek State Park **Thursday, December 27** **6:00 AM - 3:00 PM**

David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Moderate
Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the Aurora Reservoir entrance road (S. Powhaton Rd) at E Quincy Avenue, about 1.5 miles east of E470. \$10 car entry fee at Aurora and state park pass or daily entry fee at Cherry Creek.

Aurora reservoir attracts large numbers of geese and ducks and we can hope for scoters, Long-tailed Duck, Ross's Goose and more. Thayer's and Lesser Black-backed Gulls are expected and it is an excellent time for rarer species. We will visit Cherry Creek and be ready to chase any nearby rarity that might be a Big Year bird. Plan for a few miles of level walking, as snow allows.

Pueblo and Cañon City Areas **Friday, December 28** **5:00 AM - 7:00 PM**

David Suddjian
Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com
Phone: 831-713-8659
Trail Difficulty: Strenuous
Maximum Participants: 12

Directions: Meet at the Safeway on Lincoln Ave and Yosemite, one mile west of I-25 on the north side of Lincoln, in Lone Tree.

December Field Trips Continued...

This is a full day of birding at spots that are always interesting in the winter. We hope for unusual rare warblers, rare waterbirds and rich birding at several locations. This should be a great outing near the close of the Big Year. Bring lunch and scopes.

Southwestern Metro Area

Monday, December 31

7:30 AM - 1:00 PM

David Suddjian

Email: dsuddjian@gmail.com

Phone: 831-713-8659

Trail Difficulty: Moderate

Maximum Participants: 16

Directions: Meet at the Home Depot at 4277 S Eldridge St, Morrison.

Specific birding spots will be selected the day of the trip based on what is around and weather. We will seek any rare bird needed for the Big Year and visit several good sites. A few miles of walking are possible. Bring scopes and be ready to carpool. Possible state park entry fee.



Above: Common Raven
Left: Wild Turkey
Credit: Jim Esten

Denver Field Ornithologists

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February	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
March	Bill Wuerthele	303-333-2519
April	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
May	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
June	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
July	Jill Boice	303-863-7580
August	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
September	Mary Geder	303-981-8823
October	Wendy Wibbens	303-330-1175
November	Mary Cay Burger	720-940-8394
December	Jill Boice	303-863-7580

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The Lark Bunting

DFO publishes The Lark Bunting monthly. Readers are encouraged to submit original articles, book reviews, or photos for publication. Please submit articles by the 1st of the month to Sharon Tinianow, editor, at sharontinianow@gmail.com. Please submit photos of birds or of bird outings as image files to Jim Esten, photo editor, at jcesten@gmail.com. Credit will be given to authors and photographers. The editors reserve the right to select suitable articles and photos for publication and to edit any selected materials.

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In 2019, DFO monthly program meetings will be held on the fourth Monday of the month January through April and August through November. They will begin at 7 pm and are held at: Unity Spiritual Center Denver 3021 S. University Blvd.

January 28, 2019
Dave Leatherman
The Natural Wonders of Southern Colorado

February 25, 2019
TBD

March 25, 2019
Ted Floyd

April 22, 2019
Nathan Pieplow

Denver Field Ornithologists Membership Application

Join online at <https://dfobirds.org>, or by mail.

DFO memberships expire Dec. 31; valid for the next year if paid after Oct. 1.

DFO provides grants to individuals or organizations whose mission includes ornithological research, education, and conservation.

DFO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

☐ Annual family membership (electronic <i>The Lark Bunting</i>)	\$ 25
☐ Annual family membership (printed <i>The Lark Bunting</i>)	\$ 60
☐ Student membership (age ≤ 26)	\$ 10
☐ Research, Education, & Conservation Grant Fund donation	\$ _____
Total	\$ _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (optional) _____

Email (legible) _____

(Must include for electronic *The Lark Bunting*)

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